THE BEARING And BVRDEN OF the SPIRIT.

Wherein the sicknesse and soundnesse of the soule is opened, and eight Cases of conscience cleared and resolved for the stilling and comforting of perplexed consciences.

By

JOHN SEDGVVICK,

Batchelor in Divinity and Preacher of GODS Word in LONDON.

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THE BANNS

TO THE RIGHT WORSHIPFVLL

Captaine SAMVEL CARLETON Esquire, and his vertuous Wife Mr. MARTHA CARLETON, Grace and Peace from Jesus Christ.

Beloved Friends,

IT is well knowne unto you, at whose request these Sermons (now presented joyntly to you both) came to be preached, and for whose sake they are thus

printed; if any good come to any by either, next unto God, the thankes is due unto you; I cannot denie to doe that service which commeth within the compasse of my calling and power, which may either profit your selves, or satisfie any of your noble friends; my onely sorrow is, that I have so long delayed my promise, and your expectarions; you now see, long lookt for commeth at length, and my earnest desire is that it may answer the expectation of the noble Lady, and my thankfull mind, whose requitals

quitals to you and yours for many undeserved favours, lay in no other way then the furthering of your spirituall good and comfort. God (you see) gaineth glory to himselfe by weake meanes, and many times derided Sermons by braine-sick, and full men, doe proove relishing and healing to wounded consciences: I wish from my heart unto you both, and all yours the peace and purity of conscience, the integrity and sincerity of holy walking; together with the addition of all graces and comforts be-

longing with Christians, and that a spur may be found in these Sermons, to prick you on to a holy care of conscience, which will prove your best friend, or worst enemy; believe me (friend) the man is as his conscience is, if that be good in constitution, and in execution, all things will answer to it in life and death: you enjoying its goodness, shall not faile of its strength and boldness, make much of it, and cherish it therefore as your best Jewell, and in so doing, I shall account my paines so plentifully recompenced,

penced, and be further encouraged to be yours in what I am able when you shall be pleased to command mee; in meane time I take leave, and rest

Yours in the Lord Iesus,

IOHN SEDGVVICK.

5 *Dunstans in the East, London.*

To the Reader.

I Wish thee conſcience and care in reading and following what is contained in the enſuing Sermons; which are now more large in the Preſſe then they were in the Pulpit, and have received farther addition of certaine caſes, let this that is done profit thee, and helpe him with thy prayers who is thine in the beſt bond and ready to doe thee good,

JO: SEDGVVICK.

THE BEARING of the burden by the SPIRIT.

PROV. 18.14.

The spirit of a man will sustaine his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can beare?



Salomon in his Proverbs is the great Master of the Sentences, all his Parables are master Sentences, pithy, compleate, and

and excellent, their matter always exceeding their words; the context (not an end especially from the beginning of the tenth Chapter) is so absolute that each shineth in its own native brightnesse, and therefore (at this time) scorns us the seeking after any coherence.

This present Proverb presents us with two observables;

1. The power of a sound spirit against all externall calamity, uttered in these words, *The spirit of a man will sustaine his infirmitie.*

2. The impotencie of a mans spirit against inward perplexities, *A wounded spirit who can bear?*

Concerning the first part, I shall enquire into these things:

First,

First, what is meant by the infirmity of man?

Secondly, what is that spirit of a man which doth and will beare this infirmity of a man?

To the knowledge of the first enquiry, know that the infirmity of man is double,

1. One sinfull. What are all those slips, frailties, imperfections, unwilling fillings, and actions befalling the godly in their progresse of Sanctification? are they not infirmities? and it cannot be denied but that in reference to such kinde of infirmities, the spirit of a Christian is, and will be sustaining: So long as a man allowes not himselfe in evill, or evill in him-

Note.

himselfe; but can and doth thoroughly judge himself unto the bewailing, and loathing, and leaving of all knowne evill; in this case conscience will be his comfort, and his stay, upholding him in the assurance of a good estate with God against all those troubling arguments, and distressing feares wherewithall hee is daily followed.

2. Another is sorrowfull: humane calamity is humane infirmity; take all those miseries and crosses which divine providence doth inflict either immediately, or mediately upon men, suppose them to lie in the

the goods, names, bodies, children, or friends of men. And this is the infirmity of man ſpoken of in this Text; its no new thing for the Holy Ghoſt to call croſſes and afflictions befalling men, by the name of infirmity or weakneſſe, and that becauſe of that naturall imbecillity which is found in man to free himſelfe from them, or to ſtand under them; a ſtate of calamity is a weakning eſtate; and none are more weake then men under the croſſe and rod, theſe things doe make men feeble and infirme; as ſickneſſe is the weakeneſſe of the body, ſo croſſes

crosses, reproaches, and afflictions are the weakenesse of man.

Concerning our second enquirie, you must note that there is a double Spirit sustaining humane infirmity.

A two-fold Spirit.

1. One above man, and yet given unto man, and that is the Spirit of God, who is a Spirit of power, and doth helpe to beare up the burden of all our calamities; *likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities*, saith *Paul*, *Rom.* 8.26. when a Christian doth finde a weaknesse in himselfe, both to doe and to suffer; the Spirit of God is assistant unto him, and doth make the burden easie and supportable; and what we are

never

never able to beare of our selves, by his strength we can and shall beare, as the Apostle sheweth, saying, *I can do all things through him that strengtheneth mee, Phil. 4. 13.*

Another in man, which maketh him to be man; which in some places is taken largely for the whole soule of man; but in this place more narrowly and strictly for the conscience of man, its usuall for the Hebrewes to expresse conscience under the name of the spirit or the heart of man, and in the New Testament, it is called in one place our spirit, *Rom. 8. 16.* and in another

The spirit of man diversly taken.

ther place the ſpirit of man; *for what man knoweth the things of a man, ſaving the ſpirit of a man which is in him,* 1 Cor. 2. 11. and ſurely if we doe looke unto the originall, and being, and manner of working of conſcience in man, which is every way ſpirituall, it is moſt aptly named ſpirit, and this is the ſpirit which is ſo able to ſuſtaine a man under his infirmities.

Conſcience called a ſpirit and why.

Now this ſpirit of man commeth under a double conſideration.

Mans ſpirit conſidered two waies:

1. In its Creation.

1. Of Originall Creation, as it was mans before the fall, in full vigour and rectitude, and ſo it was ſpecially uſefull and ſerviceable unto *Adam*, that

that had hee beene put unto it, the Omnipotencie thereof would have borne the greateſt of burdens; a ſparke whereof is to be found, and may be ſeene in many meere naturall men; whoſe ſpirits retaine ſuch ſtrength in them, that they have endured many croſſes, and manfully received the charge of many and great calamities, thinking the chiefeſt point of vertue conſiſted in bearing croſſes and devouring injuries; they have I ſay gone farre in this work of enduring outward calamities, although failing in the right manner and the right end of the ſame.

2. Of

a. In its regeneration.

2. Of ſpirituall qualification, the ſpirit of a man, as it is renewed by grace, is ſtrong to do much, and to ſuffer much, it is of ſuch incredible might, that it doth and will ſupport in the midſt of all trouble. Grace is a creature enlivening and enlightening the ſpirit, and ſo aſſiſting to the ſpirit of a man, that it over-maſters the ſhame and in a manner the feeling of afflictions, upholding a man in being, in liberty, in confidence, and in cheerefullneſſe under all, and any even the greateſt infirmities that may or can befall him; fleſh and bloud will tremble at that trouble which grace will

will trample upon; nature will shrinke at that paine as intollerable, which a sound and sanctified spirit makes nothing of in comparison.

Yet mistake mee not, I do not say that calamity shall not be felt by a sound spirit, there is a burden in every crosse, and a kinde of weakenesse in every spirit, *No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous*, *Heb.* 12. 11. But the thing I aime at is this, *Note.*

That when conscience within man is truly good, it is mighty to beare up a man from slavish sinking and faithles fainting under the present crosse. Suppose the crosse to come in its full weight, and to be heavily laid on a man by the hand of God, yet there shall *Doct.*

be

be such a supportance from a good conscience unto man, that the burthen shall scarce be burthensome, it shall never become over burthensome, a man by it shall be kept from being slavishly dejected, or overwhelmedly fearefull, the spirit shall not faile before the crosse; No calamity shall overdaunt or overcome such an one: the Text saith, it *will sustaine the infirmity*: the holy Spirit doth not speake of it as a thing possible or probable onely, but reall and actuall, as having a certainty in it; and the truth of this you may observe two wales,

1. In the sentence of Scripture.

2. In the soundnesse of argument.

For the Scripture, in one place it saith; *Nay in all these things*

things wee are more then conquerors, Rom. 8. 37. Behold a ſtrange truth of ſpeech; *They were killed all the day long* for the ſake of Chriſt, *and accounted as ſheepe for the ſlaughter*, there was humane infirmity in extremity, and yet they were conquerors, more then conquerors, and that not in a few of theſe, but in all theſe things; here is the exceeding ſuſtaining of the ſpirit. In another place its written, *We are troubled on every ſide, yet not diſtreſſed; we are perplexed, but not in deſpaire; perſecuted, but not forſaken; caſt downe, but not deſtroied*, 2 Cor. 4. 8, 9. infirmitie was great upon theſe men, and yet not over marching, none of all theſe miſeries could bring their ſpirits under miſery; but as the maine Ocean ſwallowes up the overflowings of all other

rivers.

rivers, and as the well rig'd ship beares its owne burthen stoutly in the midst of a most tempestuous sea; so their sanctified spirits did receive all, and sustaine all these calamities, being in nothing terrified, much lesse by any thing overcome: *David*, *Iob*, *Paul*, and the holy Martyrs are ready to witnesse unto this truth, but we will spare them for this time.

Reason. Shewing unto you in the next place, that it cannot be but that a spirit in soundnesse doth and will support under humane calamity; for

1. 1. A spirit in goodnesse is a spirit of strength, and power; it is of incredible, invincible might; *when I am weake then am I strong*, saith *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 12. 10. the strength of a gracious spirit is the strength of God made perfect

perfect in weakeneſſe *verſe 9.* it is no weakeneſſe that is able to overmaſter it; power is too hard for weakeneſſe, as light is overmatching to darkneſſe; all humane calamity to a found ſpirit is but infirmity, it therefore beares it; were it ſtrength and might, then the caſe might be doubtfull, as in all caſes where power and power meet, but here is power againſt weakneſſe, and therefore no marvaile if it beare up and overcome.

7. A ſpirit in goodneſſe, is a ſpirit in comfort and cheerefullneſſe, it is fortified with the ſenſe of Gods favour, and made comfortable with divine conſolations; yea it is ſuch a lightſome temper that it takes pleaſure in infirmities; *rejoyceth in tribulation, yea and accounts it* 2.

2 Cor. 1. 10.

Rom. 5. 3

James 1.2 *all joy when it falls into divers temptations*; Now the joy of the Lord is the ſtrength of the ſoule, *Neh.*8.10. and who ſo are filled with it, can live in death, ſing in priſon, and with much courage, and conſtancy beare up; and endure any calamity.

3. 3. Such a ſpirit is a patient ſpirit; and patience is a bearing up grace; it willingly ſtoopes to the croſſe, and as readily takes up the croſſe, it doth quietly, and with admirable ſubmiſſion beare all the ſtroakes of Gods hand; and thinketh no miſery greater then is deſerved, or more then may be borne; and hereupon it is the ſtrength of a man in the evill day; a man without patience is no more able to beare any the leaſt croſſe, then a man can beare

beare a burden without a paire of ſhoulders; but when patience poſſeſſeth the ſoule and ſpirit of a man, all burdens are overcommingly and cheerefully borne.

4. A ſound ſpirit is a contented ſpirit; and contentment giveth unto a man, three things for his upholdment under the preſent calamity. 4.

Three things in contentment upholding the ſpirit.

1. Setledneſſe and ſtaiment of minde, it is the ſoules quietation under all trouble, making it ſtill and ſilent, freeing it from all thoſe murmurings, repinings, and diſturbances wherewithall naturally it is hurried up and downe like a ſhip in a ſtorme.

2. Delightfullneſſe and complacencie of ſoule, it doth not onely compoſe the mind unto any condition by an holy pliablencſſe,

bleneſſe, but it yeelds unto man an approovement of his condition, that a man ſhall ſee ſuch a goodneſſe in it unto himſelfe, that he ſhall be well pleaſed with it, no way quarrelling at it, or diſliking of it; contentment maketh the preſent condition to be Gods condition; and knoweth that Gods condition is the beſt condition, *Pſal.* 16.6.

3. Satisfyingneſſe of minde. In all contentment there is ſufficiency; there is a bleſſedneſſe even in miſery, and there ſhall be no want in all wants, the reachings and cravings of the ſoule ſhall be fully anſwered. Now hereupon, becauſe by holy contentment the ſoule is enabled to take up the impreſſion of the preſent condition, as humid qualities doe receive

the figure of their continent, and becauſe the mind and ſoule falls in with an afflicted condition as the diſpenſation and allotment of a Soveraigne and wiſe God: hence it is I ſay, that the ſpirit is ſo ſuſtaining under trialls and troubles.

5. A ſound ſpirit is a beleeving ſpirit, filled and qualified with faith, which muſt needs be a ground of ſtrong ſupportance under all humane calamities, all things being poſſible to him that beleeveth, and a ſpirit of faith is couragious and conquering; doe but conſider a fourefold worke of faith enabling the ſound ſpirit to beare its calamity. 5.

Faith doth 4. things to the enabling of the ſpirit under the croſſe.

1. It apprehends divine aſſiſtances, and ſets up overmatching helps under all calamities, it is the dejection of the ſpirit

to be left to it selfe in times of trouble; and for a man to finde to his sense a troubled condition to be his master, as we may see in *Elishaes* servant, who when he saw the great hoste of the King of *Assyria*, sent to take his master; crieth out, Alas master how shall we doe? his troubles were above all his arguments, and the man seemeth to be at his wits end; But behold the faith of *Elisha*, and you shall see it to be above all his trouble; for he quiets his owne heart, and the heart of his man, with the beleeving apprehension of a greater power with him then against him: Saying, *feare not, for they that be with us, are more then they that be with them*, 2 *King*.6.15,16. it is the worke of faith to finde out, and to bring home a Christians

helps

helps unto him in times of triall; it makes God at such times both present in favour, and assistant in councell, and power, in confidence of this *David* will lie him downe, and sleep and wake, and not be afraid of ten thousands of people that have set themselves against him round about, yea he can walke thorow the valley of the shadow of death and feare none evill, *Psal.* 23. 4. Psal. 3. 5, 6.

2. It sets up God for a mans owne in love, and care in the midst of all afflictions; God separated and divided from a Christian in any misery is the weakenesse of the Spirit and makes the heart to sinke and faint within; O how downe and dead, how crackt, and undone was *David* when God to his sense was gone from him: at

such times he was a man without a spirit, and now the evill was great, and sore, and intollerable: But when by the eye of faith God was discovered to be his God, and hee could well perceive that it was not all his afflictions which could separate him from the love of God unto him in Christ; Now he cheeres up himselfe and faith to his soule, *Why art thou so dejected O my soule? trust still in God, who is the health of my countenance and my God, Psal. 43.5.*

3. It keepeth off from the soule and spirit whatsoever might weaken or deject it in and under calamities; in the day of a Christians calamity, it is with him as it is in the gathering of a bile or botch in the body, wherein all the ill humours will make their recourse unto the botch, & ther-

by

by greatly increaſe diſquietment unto the patient; juſt ſo, when we have miſeries ſeazing upon us, ſuſpition of Gods love towards us, feares of what men can doe againſt us, and tumultuouſneſſe of paſſions will haunt and follow us, in ſo much that wee finde we have our ſelves to be greater troubles to our ſelves then all outward troubles that doe befall us; wee ſticke our ſelves in greater deepes then troubles doe caſt us into; Now faith relieveth the ſoule againſt theſe or the like things; partly in carrying a man from all the creatures unto God, ſhewing unto him that men are but men, whoſe breath is in their noſtrills, and whoſe power is confined, and malice over-ruled by the power of an Almighty God, who being with us and for

Note.

Foure waies how faith releeveth the ſoule.

us, wee need in nothing to feare who can harme us? partly in keeping a man from looking too much downeward and overwhelming our ſelves in and by the aggravation of our trouble:

Simile. if men looke too much upon the water in tempeſtuous times, their heads will ſoone ſwimme, and their ſtomacks qualme, and whileſt ſenſe and reaſon is poaring into an afflicted condition, and a man is wittie in aggravating his miſeries unto the higheſt, making the moſt and the worſt of them, the ſpirit will ſoone be ſicke, and ſink, and faint within; now faith ſets a man above all his miſerable conditions, ſhewing to a man that hee lieth not at the mercy of any his moſt miſerable conditions; that as it is not a good condition which can

can make him, ſo it is not any bad condition that can marre him, partly by ſetting a Chriſtian upon the way of mitigation, learning him the art and skill of breaking the wave in the midſt of his moſt violent toſſings. Now it ſtarts up the hand of God in all this, and the wiſedome and goodneſſe of God in ordering all unto good, which was *Davids* ſtay in the great calamity, and made him to ſay, *let him alone, and let him curſe, the Lord hath bidden him, and it may be that the Lord will looke on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite good for his curſing this day*, 2 *Sam.*16.11,12. partly by countermanding the violent riſings and habituall vexations of the ſoule; faith is an enemy unto diſtempered paſſions, it checks

checks and crieth them downe and will not admit that a man should be angry and froward, and fretfull under the hand of God; *Doſt thou well to be angry?* Jonah 4.4 ſaith faith, *ſhall wee receive good and not evill from the Lord? Iob 2.10.*

4. It puts the pawnes and earneſts of God into the hands of a Chriſtian in evill times; a man in any condition without the promiſe is as weake as miſerable; but the promiſes of God going along with a man they will proove his greateſt ſtrength and comfort in any condition; we muſt know, that the Covenant was made for the comforting of Chriſtians in all conditions, and there are ſpeciall promiſes made to Chriſtians in times of their diſtreſſe, which onely faith can finde, and ſup-

supply the Christian withall: by meanes whereof the head of a Christian is held above water, and the man made stronger then all his trialls and crosses; when faith reades that God will know the soules of his in adversity, *Nah.* 1.7. That God will be with his in the fire and water, *Esa.* 43. 2. That all miserable evills shall end in spirituall good to them that love God, *Rom.* 8.28. And that, that God who hath shewed his great and sore evills will quicken them againe, *Psal.* 71. 20,21.

Now the spirit gathers spirits unto it selfe, and is made lively, and strong; able to get upon the rock and triumph over all trouble.

Having thus opened the point unto you, the Application must needs be this.

First,

Vse 1.

First, to discover unto us that evillnesse of spirit which is in the sonnes of men; I may justly complaine, that most men doe want soundnesse and sincerity of spirit to beare them up in evill times, considering two things.

Two evidences of weaknes of spirit, 1. Feare.

1. Some men doe overfeare troubles before they come, the very empty thought and conceit of troubles is terrible and perplexing unto them; when it was told the house of *David* saying, *Syria is confederate with Ephraim, his heart was mooved, and the heart of his people as the trees of the wood are mooved with the winde, Esay* 7.2. When *Belshazzar saw the comming forth of the fingers of a mans hand, and writing over against the Candlestick upon the plaister of the wall, his countenance was changed,*

changed, and his thoughts troubled him; so that the joynts of his loines were loosed, and his knees smote one against another, Dan.5. 5,6,7. and even so is it with too too many among us, the very newes and conceit of troubles or calamities which possibly may befall us, doth put us into such shaking fits, that we know not what to doe with our selves; and now tell mee where is the soundnesse and strength of your spirit? call you that a stout spirit that is daunted with the report and thought of every calamity?

Ob. Good men have feared troubles?

Sol. Know, that there is a twofold fearing of troubles before they come. A twofold fearing of troubles,

1. Of faith

The one is, a carefull and beleeving feare, opposed to

to carnall security, which was found in holy *Iob*, who said, *the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me, Iob* 3.25. Surely the good man in his prosperity did not cast of all thought of adversity, but did wisely consider, that a change might come upon his estate and family, it might be that his sun might be darkned, and his day turned into night, and he looked upon his children, and wife, and friends, and stock, and honour, as things dying and fading, there being no constancy in outward mercies unto any.

The

The other is, a carking and distressing feare opposite unto faith and comfort; a fearing either without a cause, or beyond all bounds, thorough the utter mistake of a miserable condition unto the sons of men; wherein feares doe cut, and divide the heart, even emptying a man of all present joy, and future hope; this now is an argument that the spirit of infirmity doth possesse a man, and that hee wants that spirit which will sustaine a mans infirmity. 1. Of distrust.

2. Some men are overburdened by the crosses which do befall them, the least crosse that is doth sink them, and they cannot 2. Faintnesse.

not beare or endure any calamity, indeed before that troubles come, they will brag and boast as if they would and could carry all the world before them, and no adversity could overmaster them or their spirits; but when they are put to it, and the day of triall commeth, alas they are men of very poore and impotent spirits, *Achitophel* like, who being under disacceptation most desperately hangs himselfe, as being no way able to beare it; O how doe men roare, and complaine, and lie downe in the dust, suffering crosses to binde them hand and foot, and to spoile them of all their comforts? it is strange to observe the weakenesse of spirit in some men, who though they have many comforts for one crosse, yet that one crosse doth so dampe and daunt them,

them, that all joy and comfort is gone, and they are mightily overwhelmed; thus doe moſt men want ſupporting ſpirits: and ſurely their ſtrength is weake *who faint in the day of trouble*, *Prov.*24. 10. and ſuch men may doe well to ſuſpect the ſoundneſſe of their ſpirits; certaine it is, that there is a want of ſoundneſſe of ſpirit where the ſupportance of ſpirit doth wholy faile: ceaſe to wonder that thou art ſo ſinking and fainting, and leave crying out againſt the greatneſſe of thy preſent trouble, knowing that there wants ſuch a ſpirit within as ſhould be, which is the cauſe of this thy failing.

Queſt. But may not a deare childe of God faint, and his ſpirit faile him in the day of his calamities?

Unto

Unto this I anſwer three things.

Sol. 1. 1. That it may ſo fall out, that a Chriſtian indeed may be to ſeeke of the helpe and ſtrength of his ſpirit in and under croſſes befalling him; Suppoſe him

1. To have forfeited the ſenſe of divine favour.
2. To have formerly neglected or abuſed divine aſſiſtances.
3. To be ſuddainely ſurprized by the ſtrangeneſſe and the ſtrength of the calamity comming upon him.
4. To be followed both with the continuation of ſome grieving

grieving affliction, or the multiplication and comming in of one crosse upon the neck of another.

And surely in these and the like times, the spirit within him which alwaies retaineth strength and might, may not be so serviceable and supporting unto him as at other times it hath beene, and in time to come it may be againe.

2. That though there may be much fainting overtaking the spirits of sanctified men for a time, yet it is not totall faintnesse; there is and may be a very weake upholdment; the spirit is many times

Sol. 2.

times well neare ſpent in the ſpirituall conflict, and labouring under ſome grievous wounds, and now it upholds in much weakneſſe; a horſe that is almoſt tired, carrieth his burden, but not in that pace and with that mettle as when hee was freſh; there are degrees of ſtrength; ſometimes wee are holpen with a little helpe, *Dan.* 11.34. and it is a day of ſmall things with us, and it is not much that the ſpirit within doth for us; at other times the ſpirit being freed is more full of aſſiſtance and carrieth us thorough all troubles; one mans ſpirit may ſuſtaine him under

The ſtrength of the ſpirit is gradual.

under his infirmity more then another; yea and the ſpirit of the ſame man may at one time and in one croſſe more beare him out then in another. Witneſſe *David*, who in the caſe of *Nabal* was very weake and paſſionate; he had ſcarce the ſpirit of a man in him. But now in the caſe of *Shimei* where the croſſe was farre greater, his ſpirit did with much ſtrength beare him out.

3. That there is a double ſinking of the ſpirit under afflictions, or miſerable evills. *Sol.3.*

1. One ariſing from the weakneſſe of nature in the want of all

grace, and thus the godly faint not.

2. Another arising from the weakneſſe of grace by the oppoſition of temptation and corruption.

And thus the godly may faint in part, but they ſhall come to a recovery of themſelves againe; it is with the godly in their ſinkings under afflictions, as with a man that is skilfull to ſwimme; at the firſt when hee is caſt into the water he is over head and eares, and the whole body is covered, but by and by hee riſeth up againe and ſwimmes upon the water, commanding the water under him; whereas it is with a meere naturall and carnall man

man in his ſinkings under afflictions, as it is with a ſtone caſt into the deepe, there is a great noiſe made, but he ſinketh lower and lower and never riſeth up againe.

Vſe 2. To examine the ſtrength and ſufficiency of our ſpirits to our enabling under the croſſes wee ſuffer; tell mee not ſo much of the greatneſſe and grievouſneſſe of your croſſes, which you are quick enough to doe, but anſwer mee, what is the ſpirit within you? and how doth it ſerve and helpe you? can it, and doth it ſuſtaine you, rightly bearing the burden for you? I yeeld, 1. That ſome mens ſpirits can and do ſleight croſſes, and ſeemingly they make nothing of them; but with the Leviathan they laugh at the ſha-

king of the ſpeare; but this is an argument of an evill and naughty ſpirit not to be ſenſible of Gods hand and rod. 2. That men carnall and formall to outward ſeeming are marveilous hardy in temper, and ſtout in ſpirit, and have without flinching or fainting paſſed thorough many afflictions, and endured extreame torments, when alas they have brawned themſelves, or a ſpirit of ſlumbering and benummednesſe is caſt upon them; and for ſome ſelfe aimes they have only reſtrained paſſion, in the meane time they doe remaine deſtitute of all poſitive joy, peace and confidence, and want the aſſurance of the goodneſſe of their ſpirits in bearing the croſſe befalling them.

Queſt. How may a man know

that by a ſound and good ſpirit hee beareth the croſſe and calamity which God layeth upon him?

Anſw. By theſe Signes.

Three ſignes of a ſound ſpirit upholding man under the croſſe.

1. When the cauſe of ſuffering is good; a good ſpirit cannot beare up in an ill cauſe; when a man ſuffers as a murderer, or as a thiefe, or as an evill doer, or as a buſie body in other mens matters, as it is written, 1 *Pet.* 4. 15. Now conſcience cannot uphold; but when a man ſuffers as a Chriſtian, and is reproached for the name of Chriſt, conſcience can and doth uphold, as you may reade in the 14. and 16. verſes of the ſame Chapter; we ſee the ſtoutneſſe of the Apoſtles enduring the laſh and the priſon, was grounded on this, that they *were counted worthy to ſuffer*

1. A good cauſe.

ſhame for his name, Acts 5. 41.

2. A good carriage.

2. When the carriage under the croſſe is becomming a good ſpirit, which carrieth a man under the croſſe,

Six waies of the ſpirits carrying a man under the croſſe.

1. With ſilence, ſtopping inward frettings, and outward murmurings againſt the Lord; making a man to ſay, yet my ſoule be ſilent unto the Lord, it layeth the mouth in the duſt, *and dares not open the mouth againſt the Lord to charge him fooliſhly*, 1 *Sam.* 3. 18, 19. *Pſal.* 39. 9. 62. 5.

2. With ſubmiſſion and ſubjection; the ſoule is low and very humble, poore, and exceeding empty; the man is caſt downe under Gods hand and will; ſaying, *it is the Lord, let him doe as it ſeemeth good unto him*, 1 *Sam.* 3. 18. 2 *Sam.* 15. 25.

3. With

3. With thankefullneſſe; the man can kiſſe the rod, and bleſſe the rod, and ſay with *Iob*, *the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, bleſſed be the name of the Lord, Iob* 1.21,22.

4. With religion; making God as lovely and good, and worthy to be praiſed and prayed unto under calamity as at any other time of proſperity; a man under the power of a ſound ſpirit doth looſe much of his ſinne, nothing of his godlineſſe; I dare ſay he is more quick and hearty in his devotion then at other times; the ſoule doth now ſettle it ſelfe upon ſpirituall imployment, and is taken up with God, *Is any man afflicted, let him pray, Iames* 5. 13.

5. With humiliation; now a man ſhall finde the guilts of

his sinne, and doth consider the deserts of his sins, hee can and doth weepe more for the sinfullnesse of sinne, then for all the evills he doth sustaine and endure; he well knoweth that man suffereth for his sinne; and that sinne deserveth more evill, then God inflicts upon his children; and that the evill of sinne being the greatest of evills, can never be sufficiently bewailed.

6. With hope, waiting upon Gods time and pleasure for deliverance out of trouble, expecting that great good shall happily befall him in and by all the troubles which he endureth; hee considers that as the Bee hath his sting, so hee hath his honey; and crosses have their comforts in the latter end, as well as bitternesse in the beginning.

ginning. I say such men doe put themselves into the Covenant and Promise, and will keep themselves there; they doe see the Covenant going along with them in their trialls and troubles, and doe beleeve that a little assured good is above a great deale of sensible evill; and this is the moderation of their spirit in and under the rod.

Note.

3. When their comming out of trouble is glorious and gracious; a sound spirit doth beare afflictions with power unto profit; and carrieth all painefull evills with soveraigne good unto it selfe; so that when a Christian is at the end of his trouble and tossings, he shall set downe with great cost and recompence; having the great fruit of his patience; even blessed is he that endureth, and the Spirit of

3. A good issue.

God and glory shall rest upon him, he shall say with *David*, *before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word*, Psal. 119. 67. *And it is good for me that I have beene afflicted, that I might learne thy statutes*, verse 71. *Nevertheless afterward it yeeldeth the peareable fruit of righteousnesse unto them which are exercised thereby*, Heb. 12. 11. if we can finde any good by afflictions, that our proud hearts are humbled, that our corruptions are weakned and wasted; that our graces are quickned and enlarged, and that we are in any degree made more holy and heavenly; this is an argument unto us, that we have borne all our afflictions by the strength of a sound spirit.

rse 3. Labour that there may be found

found within you a good and a ſound ſpirit to beare you up under your troubles; we know not to what times of tryall God hath reſerved us; wee may meete with the croſſe, and calamity may be our portion, wee know not how ſoone, and then ſtrength to beare will doe well; but know, that there is nothing will better helpe in ſufferings, and keepe up the ſoule in patience and comfort, then the ſpirit which is ſpirituall, there is no ſpirit to the ſound ſpirit, and the ſpirit can never be ſound untill that it be made ſpirituall; conſcience was made good at the firſt; and conſcience is fit for goodneſſe now, and goodneſſe will be the good of it, and the good of man by it; learne to know two things.

The goodnesse of spirit stands in 7. things. 1. Holines

First, that the goodnesse of conscience stands, 1. In its sanctity by spirituall renovation; when as it is free from the filth of corruption, and qualified with divine graces.

2. Quietnesse.

2. In its quietnesse and peace, it must be pacified as well as purified; it must not onely be privatively quiet, but also positively quiet, there must not only be no torment, but a blessed security and assurance within it.

3 Uprightnesse.

3. In its sincerity, it must be upright, freed from the rottennesse of guile and hypocrisie, this is that truth in the inward parts which God so much delighteth in, *Psal.* 51.6.

4 Strength

4. In its ability, when it is strong in execution, and able to exercise its owne operations, and freely disposed to spirituall im-

imployments; what good can conscience doe us whilest it is weake and unable to beare it selfe?

5. In its tendernesse, it must be feeling, melting, yeelding, and bleeding. 5. Tendernesse.

6. In its clearenesse, the good of conscience is the light in conscience, it must be filled with saving light, and be informed by the rule, not onely naturall, but spirituall; it must in some measure in a spirituall manner see and know it selfe, its God, its duty, its way, its worke, its object. 6. Clearenesse.

7. In its freedome, it must have liberty, although it hath a binding power, which it derives from the Word of God, yet it selfe must be freed from entanglements by sinne and error, and must be brought into 7. Liberty

bon-

bondage by no creature

Two wayes of attaining goodnesse of spirit.

Secondly, the way to attaine this goodnesse of spirit is,

1. To be sensibly convinced of the badnesse and naughtinesse of our spirits naturally; we have within us no sparke of saving goodnesse, but our hearts are full of guile and guilt, *and they are evill above all things, Ier.17.9.* wee foolishly fancie their naturall goodnesse, and that keepeth us of from sound endeavour after their spirituall goodnesse; who among us would labour after that which hee conceiveth hee wants not; our worke is to get sound acquaintance with the illnesse and baseneſse of our owne spirits, and to bewaile the same before the Lord.

2. To set upon the use of those meanes whereby badnesse

neſſe may be removed, and true goodneſſe may be brought into your conſciences, which I conceive are theſe foure.

Meanes of making conſcience good to beare are foure.

1. The Spirit in Sanctification, who alone can and doth heale the infirmity of mans ſpirit, by the ſubduing of corruption within him, and vouchſafing courage and ſtrength unto the inner man by the creation of all ſaving graces within.

1. The Spirit.

2. The Lord Jeſus in application, there is that vertue in the bleedings and dyings of Chriſt, that it is able to kill and crucifie ſinne, and to ſprinkle from an evill conſcience; *and ſo purge the conſcience from dead works*

2 Chriſt.

works to serve the living God, Heb. 9. 14. & 10. 22. there is enough in the Lord Jesus to make us wholly holy, and truly good in Gods sight; he being made unto us of God, Wisedome, and Sanctification; and one every way fitted for the communication of holinesse to his members.

3. The Word.

3. The Word in administration, the Law and the Gospell meeting in the spirituall vertue thereof with the spirit of man, is a notable meanes to make it good and sound; the Word of God by its comfortable promises, and cleare directions doth and will mightily enable the spirit

rit in his office of upholding and ſtrengthening man in the daies of adverſity: the Word of God is ſutable nouriſhment unto the ſpirit; it is ſtrong, and the admirable ſtrength of the ſpirit; it is ſweet, and the great refreſher of the ſpirit; it doth every way ſo glad and cheare mans ſpirit, that it giveth him moſt ſure grounds of ſtanding under the greateſt burdens; beleeve mee, if that conſcience be not informed by the Word, it is blind; and where it is not fed by the promiſes, it is infirme, and can never beare up our infirmities; *Vnleſſe thy Law*

Note.

Law had beene my delight, I should then have perished in mine affliction, Psal.119.92.

4. Faith.

4. Faith in operation; a conscience full of infidelity is full of badnesse, and feares, and sinkings; but the more beleeving the heart is, the more sound, and the more stout it is; *I had fainted unlesse I had beleeved to see the goodnesse of the Lord in the land of the living, Psal. 27.13.* I assure you, that faith is a grace that deales with the God of all comfort, and the Word of all comfort; and when distresses are like a strong tyde beating much upon us, it is as a rock beating off

Note.

off all waves, and keepes the ſpirit in ſtrength and courage in times of trouble.

Laſtly, learne a duty of care and reſpect towards your ſpirits, that they may performe their office in upholding and ſtrengthening you in the daies of your adverſity; if that our ſpirits faile us we are undone; and to this purpoſe I ſhall adviſe you unto theſe things: *Vſe 4.*

Six things to be done about the ſpirit.

1. Abuſe not conſcience; the abuſe of our beſt friends is baſe, and we cannot with ſafety to our ſelves abuſe our ſpirits. Now men abuſe their conſcience 12. waies. 1 Abuſe is not.

Twelve wayes of abuſing conſcience

1. By reſiſting the motions thereof; there is in conſcience a certaine naturall power, either by a watch word to give warning when men are bent

bent to sinne, or to give the check after the commission of sin; it is a word within us, or behind us, it doth dictate to us, or direct us: Now when a man shall crosse conscience in this worke, and notwithstanding all that it saith and doth, go on in an evill way; this is the abuse of conscience by an act of resistance.

2. By disregarding the motions thereof: conscience is speaking, and that very loud; it many times groweth importunate with us, and stands in our way at every turne. Now when men turne away their eare, and passe over conscience, finding out other matters of very purpose that they may not answer or follow conscience, it is a great abuse of conscience, *Acts* 24. 26.

3. By

3. By wounding and wasting it; our ſpirits are tender things, and ſhould be gently uſed: it is as our eye, and every the ſmalleſt duſt offends it; it is as a glaſſe, and every knocke crackes it; it is a brittle ſhip, and we may ſoone make ſhipwrack of it, 1 *Tim.* 1. 19. a ſinfull courſe will wound and waſt conſcience: but take mee ſinnes committed againſt the light of nature, of Scripture, and of grace, and thoſe doe exceedingly gore conſcience.

4. By diſquieting and vexing it; to bring trouble and torment into the ſoule, is no ſmall abuſe of the ſoule; it is the greateſt injurie that can be done unto it, and this men doe

1. In

Conscience vexed and how?

1. In forcing sinne upon it.
2. In linking sin with it.
3. In hindering the operations of it.

5. By tempting it; some men proove divels unto their own consciences: partly in laying baites before them, setting conscience in the presence of vilenesse, and using it to sinfull companies, or sinfull occasions; certaine I am, that it is a hard matter to keepe all faire with conscience, when and where there is nothing but vilenesse: and partly in trying conclusions upon them; men play the Empericks with their consciences, putting them upon the practise of things, the lawfullnesse whereof they know not, or are not yet resolved of.

Two waies of tempting conscience

6. By deading and searing it; conscience is and would

be

be living and ſenſible, now when men brawne it by the daily and cuſtomary practiſes of horrible and groſſe ſinnes, or by diſuſance, they doe abuſe it, and ſo diſable it for all ſpirituall ſervice.

7. By ſmoothering the ſcruples of it; conſcience is many times full of reall and perſonall caſes, and ſometimes it is not able to reſolve it ſelfe, now if a man through pride or baſhfullneſſe ſhall keep all cloſe, and not ſeeke the ſatisfaction and reſolution thereof, this maketh the inward ranckling and feſtering and languiſhing thereof.

8. By blinding and darkening it; knowledge is the eye and light of conſcience, for it ſeeth no more then it knoweth, now ignorance is the thing

thing that blindes conſcience, and without knowledge it is not good; it is a madneſſe in men to take away or to put out the light which ſhould guide and direct their owne conſciences in things to be beleeved and done.

9. By abaſing it; conſcience was made for goodneſſe, to uphold and maintaine that, and for high and holy imployment, to doe that; now when it ſhall be uſed for a colour and cloake for ſinne and wickedneſſe (and men ſhall either make their ſins to carry the name of conſcience, as unwarranted opinions and practiſes now adaies doe; or make conſcience the cauſe of ſinne, as too many do, who cannot come to Church and receive the holy Sacraments, under a pretence that

that conſcience will not let them, a great belying and abuſing of conſcience, or to make conſcience a falſe witneſſe; faſtning untruths on it, as doe ſuch men that will take it upon their conſciences, that it is not ſo nor ſo as they are accuſed, when indeed it is ſo; conſcience is put to ſweare againſt conſcience, and to ſpeake againſt conſcience, and to accuſe and condemne, and to execute conſcience; this is the putting of conſcience unto the baſeſt offices that can be) and this way men doe notably abuſe conſcience.

Conſcience abaſed and how?

10. By ſilencing it; conſcience within us can and would ſpeake unto us, when as others cannot, or dare not to ſpeake unto us. Now when men command it unto ſilence, and ſtop the

the mouth thereof, and cannot endure that it ſhould be a voice either of direction or correction unto them, but bribe or choake conſcience, it is a great abuſe unto it.

11. By neglecting it; conſcience is worthy our beſt reſpect and attendance, and wee cannot do too much to cheriſh and refreſh it. Now when men ſhall runne from it, as many a Whore doth from her childe, leaving it upon the Pariſh, and let who will looke after it; when men ſhall never enquire after its health, but ſuffer it to take grievous falls and hurts; when men ſhall paſſe over its wounds not minding its cure; when men ſhall ſuffer it to want the beſt meanes of information, conſolation, and corroboration, and let it cry it ſelfe to death,

they

they shew most horrible cruelty unto conscience, and doe as grossely abuse it, as a Nurse doth her sucking babe, to whom she denieth her care, and breasts.

12. By overloading and entangling it; conscience can and will beare much; but yet as the overlading of a ship is her sinking, so the overlading of conscience by sinnes, and sorrowes, and feares, and impertinent scruples, is the abusing and wronging of conscience.

2. 2. Lay out for the true good and strengthening of the spirit within you; wee must endeavour to maintaine it in a state of goodnesse; cherishing and keeping up its goodnesse that it die not; it will quit cost for us so to do; the good and strength of conscience is our good and

ſtrength at all times; let this then be your worke,

1. Remoove daily the evillneſſe of ſin from within it, and before it: nothing is the undoing of conſcience but ſinne, and we muſt endeavout after the daily bathing of it in the blood of the Lord Jeſus: for the increaſing of of irs renovation by the Spirit, we muſt be much in the practiſe of repentance, and waſhing away thoſe ſins which lie upon conſcience, by the teares of godly ſorrow.

2. Feed and nouriſh it with its appointed food; the ſtrength of our naturall ſpirits ſtands in their nouriſhment, & it is as true of our ſpirituall ſpirits, conſcience muſt not be overfaſted nor overphyſick'd, but we muſt give it the Word in promiſe, Chriſt in merit, and the ſenſe of pardoning

ning mercy, and then we flesh and refresh it.

3. Make use of the strength of conscience for your supportance: conscience was made for use, the excellencie of it stands in its use, and if wee doe put conscience unto it, it will be our confidence in times of common feares and dangers, it will steele our hearts and beare up our mindes as stoutly and as safely, as the waters did the Arke of *Noah*; nay, it will proove an Arke or Garrison unto us for our safety; learne therefore upon the accesse of all calamity to retire into conscience, and commune with thine owne spirit, and call upon conscience to doe its office and worke; keepe not conscience idle within you; the lesse you imploy it, the 3.

unfitter will it be for your ſtrength and ſervice; call upon it to act its owne proper operations, and you ſhall find the comfort of it unto you in your afflictions.

4. 4. Secure the ſound ſpirit within you; it is our upholdment and ſecurity, and therefore by an holy care and watchfullneſſe keepe it above all keepings, *Prov.* 4. 23. Some men have made ſhipwracke of conſcience and loſt it, 1 *Tim.* 1. 19. and our condition in this life is full of danger, conſcience within us, is in the midſt of many and malicious adverſaries, and in as much danger by evill men and divels as ever, and it ſtands us much upon to bee watchfull, and to bee alwayes fearefull and jealous, leaſt both we and

it become a prey unto Satan, to this end, 1. Shut carnall security out of doores; 2. Avoide all occasions of sinning, play not upon the hole of the Aspe, and come not neare the den of the Cockatrice; 3. Wisely withstand temptations unto all sin, and wickednesse; 4. Keepe close to the rule in a holy and religious practise.

5. Give contentment unto conscience; in nothing willingly offend or displease it; this is the wages that is due unto it for sustaining our infirmity: we are not to displease such a friend that beareth all our costs and charges, and taketh upon him the burden of all our cares, and doth not conscience much more for us? Learne then, 1. To give God content:

5. The contenting of conscience stands in 2. things.

content: in the pleasing of God you greatly content conscience; the servant hath no reason to be offended all the while his master is quieted. 2. To promote conscience in its power, unto its place: conscience must be more worth unto us then the world; wealth must not buy it, worship must not equall it, wee must not preferre the pleasing of men or our selves unto it, it is the discontent of conscience to be undervalued or to be put off at low rates: and surely, if the governement of conscience be despised, it cannot be pleased; conscience is conscience, and will and must be knowne and acknowledged to be conscience; you must heare and obey conscience; go and do what conscience enjoyneth, we must worke, and stop,

and feare, and hope, and give, and lend, and reſtore when conſcience bids us, conſcience muſt not be croſſed and vexed by us wittingly or willingly, it deſerves better of us.

6. Prevent the wound and torment of it, take care that you make it not terrible and troubleſome unto your ſelves; if it be your burden how ſhall it then be able to ſuſtaine your infirmity? we reade forward in the Text, *a wounded ſpirit who can beare?* 6.

THE BVRDEN of the ſpirit under its wounds.

But a wounded ſpirit who can beare?

HEere wee have the impotencie of mans ſpirit againſt inward perplexities laid down by way of an interrogation, which is a moſt vehement Negation,

gation, *who can beare?* (i.e.) no man can beare it: in which words the Holy Ghost doth teach us these two things:

1. That the spirit of man may be wounded.

2. That the wounded spirit is insupportable.

Wee will begin with the possible estate of the spirit or conscience of man, which is this,

Doct.2. Mans spirit may be greatly wounded.

That it may come under great and fearefull wounds: I am poore and needy, and my heart is wounded within me, saith *David, Psal.*109.22. and againe he tells us, that *his spirit was overwhelmed within him, Psal.* 142.3. we finde wicked men, and good men wounded in their spirits unto great vexation. I shall briefely open unto you three things:

1. What

1. What a wounded ſpirit is?

2. The difference of the wound in the good and bad.

3. The grounds and cauſes of this wound.

For the firſt, know that a wounded ſpirit, is a ſpirit, which for the time doth ſenſibly ſuffer miſerable, and in a ſort, helliſh evills in a diſtreſſefull, uncomfortable, fearefull, reſtleſſe and deſperate manner. 1. A wounded ſpirit what.

There goeth to the making of the wounded ſpirit theſe things:

1. Miſerable, and in a degree, helliſh evills; I ſay that innumerable evills doe compaſſe the ſoule; it is not one miſery, but an army which doth at this time follow a man; *thou reneweſt thy plagues againſt me, and thou increaſeſt thy wrath upon*

on me, changes and armies of ſorrowes are againſt mee, ſaith *Iob* 10.17. the ſoule is caſt into a peck of troubles, and into the abundance of calamity; yea, and it is ſuch kind of miſery which nothing can better repreſent and ſhaddow then the very paines of the damned; the ſoule for the time feeleth that gnawing worme, and lieth (as it were) boyling and frying in hell fire; there is no torment like unto it, it goeth beyond all, having a fullneſſe and exquiſiteneſſe of miſery in it.

2. The feeling of thoſe miſerable evills; a man hath now his conſcience opened, and is made to know and apprehend the extremities of miſeries which now lieth upon him, even with fullneſſe of weight; the ſpirit of man is living, and very

very tender, and miſery and diſtreſſe is felt. In a ſeared conſcience there is nothing but ſenſeleſneſſe, for that is paſt feeling, *Epheſ.*4.19. but in a wounded conſcience there is ſome life and tenderneſſe; the practicall notions are not quite extinguiſhed; the naturall light is ſtill burning, and indeed miſeries would not be miſeries unto us, did they not touch us to the quick.

3. The manner of the apprehending of thoſe miſerable evills, which is every way moſt grievous; for

First of all it is with much diſtreſſe of ſoule; the ſoule is thereby filled with unſpeakeable anguiſh and paine, it is as it were put upon the rack, and put to torture and torment in extremity; *my ſoule is ſore troubled* Pſal. 77. ſaith

ſaith *David*, *Pſal.6.3.* there is ſuch a ſtrange oppreſſion upon the ſpirit that the heavineſſe of it is unto death, *Mat.26. 37.*

Secondly, it is without all comfort unto the ſpirit: it is all darkneſſe without the mixture of light; the ſpirit of a man is ſo drunke up, that it now waſteth it ſelfe in daily heavineſſe; *O that my griefe were well weighed*, ſaith *Iob 6.2. My ſoule refuſed comfort*, ſaith *David*, *Pſal 77. 2.* a man under the wound of conſcience is ſo under the power of diſcomfort, and ſo ſwallowed up of heavineſſe, that the ſoule can enjoy no ſpirituall or naturall comfort for the time, every thing doth terrifie it, nothing doth comfort it.

Thirdly, it is a ſpirit filled with horror and feare; and that

that not only in the apprehenſion of preſent miſery, but by the expectation of more and future evills; the wounded ſpirit is a ſpirit of horrible bondage, and keepes a man in bondage to ſervile terrors, and trembling thoughts, the dreadfull ſound is alwaies heard, and ſuch men doe create, meditate, and multiply feares, the ſpirit of trembling doth ſo overtake them, that they are a terror unto themſelves; they daily apprehend nothing but guilt, and wrath, and death, and hell, and damnation, *Iob* 15.21. *Deut.* 28. 65. *Dan.* 5. *Ier.* 20.4.

Fourthly, it is full of unquietneſſe, and daily toſſings and tumblings; it is exceeding reſtleſſe and raging; O the diſquiet of a wounded conſcience, the ſea in time of tempeſt is not more

more raging and rowling; madneſſe is not more working and unquiet; the plague and other impetuous diſeaſes are not more vexing and reſtleſſe to a man then a wounded ſpirit is; *Thou keepeſt mine eyes waking*, ſaith *David*, *Pſal.77.4. When I held my tongue my bones conſumed, thine hand is heavie upon me day and night, Pſal.32. 3.4. My ſore ran and ceaſed not in the night, Pſal.77.2. Why art thou ſo diſquieted within mee O my ſoule, Pſal.43.5.*

Laſtly, the ſpirit is caſt into the devouring gulfe of deſperation; ſuch under the feeling of their ſpirituall miſeries, doe conceive a deſperateneſſe of condition; ſuch do now begin to damme up all the ſprings of mercy, and drie up the bloud of Chriſt, and cloſe up the doore

doore of grace againſt themſelves; and that I may not be miſtaken in this point, note with mee two things,

1. That in ſtrictneſſe of divinity wee are to make a difference betweene a wounded and a deſperate conſcience; the one runs beyond the other in many things. *Note.*

2. That in every wounded conſcience there is a degree of deſperation; ſometimes and in ſome men it runneth in more compleatneſſe, when men take their ſinnes in ſuch an high manner, and with ſuch an over-reaching power, as that neither mercy can, or will eaſe them; they ſet an eternall night within their ſoules without hopes of a morning, framing to themſelves an utter impoſſibility of pardoning mercy as

Deſperation in every wounded conſcience compleatly or incompleatly.

as *Caine*, *Gen.*4.13. and *Iudas*, *Mat.*27.5. and this is a distresse of distresses, and a greater evill then the disease it selfe. Sometimes againe some men under the wound of the soule are more incompleately desperate, they onely thinke and feare that God will cast them away and hath shut up his mercies and loving kindnesse from them; heare they lie languishing and bleeding, and are only holpen with this, that though they cannot apply, yet they dare not deny unto themselves Gods mercy, and Christ in merit: and this was the case of *David* under his wound, *Psal.*77.7,8,9,10.

Note.

4. The time of mans feeling this misery and calamity; I know well that the wound of the spirit is graduall; in some it is more then in other, and it hath

hath not alike continuance in all; in some it is but for a little space, they quickly recover of their disease, and attaine refreshment and comfort, as we may see in *Peter*, *he went out and wept bitterly*, there was his wound in spirit; but hee could speake comfortably and confidently to Christ after his Resurrection, this shewed that he was not long in the agony; *Paul* lay three daies in the affliction and distresse of spirit, and then least hee should be swallowed up of too much sorrow, *Ananias* was sent unto him to refresh and comfort him; But as God gives speedie ease to some, so hee is pleased to let others lie a longer time under the perplexities of a wounded spirit. *David* cries out, *shall I never be remembred*, *Psal.* 13. 1.

The degrees and the continuance of this wound in men different

My

My soule is sore troubled, but Lord how long wilt thou delay? Psal.6.3. Now let the time be shorter or longer, *All the daies of the afflicted are evill, Prov.15. 15.* and all the while a man doth feele this evill, so long the wound doth remaine.

2. Wee must know, that though the wound of conscience is incident unto good and bad, yet it is with a great and wide difference; the wounds of spirit in wicked men are,

The difference that is between the wound of the wicked & the wound of the godly in 5. things.

1. Legall; they spring up in the soule from the terrible operation of the law within their soules; the Law of God hath an extreame curse written in it, and this it writes in the conscience of every wicked man, I say by its spirituall vigour it gets within the conscience of a wicked

wicked man, and ſo the wound is made: there is no worke of the Goſpell as well as of the Law, but all is done and made by the Law alone, in all unregenerate men.

2. Pænall and judiciall, ſuch men lie under the juſtice and wrath of God, and for feare of hell and puniſhment are moſt of all caſt downe, ſo that were there no puniſhment to be endured, it were not the diſpleaſure or offence of God by ſin that ſhould amaze them; *My puniſhment is greater then I am able to beare*, ſaith *Caine*, Gen. 4. 13. whereas the wound in the godly is paternall and penitentiall, a fatherly chaſtiſement of God for tryall, wherein the childe of God is wounded moſt at heart by the deepe apprehenſion of his ſinnes, and the diſ-

displeasure of his Father against sin, or

3. Violent; the wound in them worketh with more and greater violence, having more of the fire of hell in it; such men are wholly under the terrors of the wound, having no assistance from God, no hope of ease, no glimpse of light, and no allayment by the saving power of the Gospell, which the godly doe finde first or last, more or lesse in degree.

4. Mortall, the wound in the issue prooveth desperate and incurable, and though for a time their spirits may be benummed by the application of false meanes, that so there may seeme to be a cessation of the raging thereof, yet the wound remaineth still; they carry it with them to the grave, to the judge-

judgement ſeate of God, yea and to hell it ſelfe; whereas God doth in due time, and by good meanes make a compleat cure of all the wounds in the ſpirits of his; there being no diſeaſe in their ſoule, but as it is poſſible of cure, ſo it is alſo actually cured in Gods time by Gods meanes.

5. Hurtfull; the wounds of wicked men do them no good but hurt, they are hereby driven from God, and fall away more and more; whereas the wound in the godly is an occaſion of much good unto them, by the wounding of their ſpirits they are wrought unto theſe ſix things.

The benefit of ſpirituall wounds in the godly ſerve in 6. things.

1. Senſe of ſin.

1. Senſibleneſſe of the bitter and ſad effects of ſin; God hath waies enough to make his feele their ſins; as his Word, which ſtrikes

Three waies of feeling ſin.

strikes hard on the eare, threatning sin and wickednesse, then if men hate reproofe, and harden their hearts, God hath his rod; he sheweth man his judgement, and in that mans sin and his anger, by which if man will not learne righteousnesse, and feele the bitternesse of his sin, then troubles arise in conscience, that shall be awakened, and dis-eased, that shall come upon man with feares and horrors for the sins that he hath committed; so that hereby he shall be made to possesse the sinnes of his youth, and to know his owne wickednesse, as *Iob* and *David* did.

Job 23.26
Psal. 51.3.

2. Humility of soule

2. Humility and emptinesse of soule; the wounds of the spirit doth weaken the proud and perverse conceits of mans owne strength and righteousnesse;

neſſe; God by theſe doth make men vile in their owne eyes and opinions; it is ſtrange to ſee what riſing humours are found in the godly before the wound befalleth them, their blood is exceedingly over-heated; but now by an humbled ſpirit God doth worke them to an humble ſpirit, carrying them as to ſin-deniall, ſo to ſelfe-deniall.

3. Enquiry after ſinne; theſe wounds of the ſpirit doe make us reflect on the evill of ſinne, and to ſearch more ſeriouſly and narrowly into what wee have done, when the ſpirit is wounded it is moſt in agitation, and in a manner taken up wholly with reflexive acts; it is oftimes with a troubled conſcience as it is with troubled waters, the troubling of which

3. Search after ſin.

fetcheth up that mud and filth which lay ſunke and buried below; men doe begin to ſee more clearely what they have done by what they ſuffer, let God trouble *Ioſephs* brethren, and this preſents unto them their long paſt guilt in ſelling their brother, *Gen.*42.21. and when Iſrael was troubled with Gods wrath and mortality, they could now reade their ſinnes in Gods countenance, *Pſal.* 90. 7,8.

4. Confeſſion of ſin.

4. Confeſſion and acknowledgement of ſinne; deepe wounds provoke unto vomiting, and although we are naturally as apt to conceale as to commit ſinne, yet ſpirituall wounds will not long be hid; *David* like a childe had hurt himſelfe, and he hides it; he had taken downe poyſon and keepes

keepes ſilence; but at laſt the wound feſtered, and his heart was too heavie for his body, ſo as hee roareth for the diſquietment of his ſpirit, and he is made moſt freely and humbly to acknowledge his ſinne unto God, *Pſal.* 32. 3, 4, 5.

5. Deteſtation of ſin; ſpirituall wounds doe worke in the godly deepe hatred againſt ſinne; O this lying under the ſenſe of wrath, this racking under the ſtrong and piercing accuſations of conſcience for ſin, doth incenſe the ſoule with the deepeſt loathing of ſinne that may be, ſo that the broken ſinner ſaith unto it, get thee hence, *Eſa.* 30. 22. 5. Hatred of ſin.

6. Reformation of life, endeavours of obedience for the future, with watchfull feare againſt ſinne, is the fruit of the 6. Change of life.

ſpirituall wound in Gods children; ſuch doe ſay, now I finde and feele what it is to venture on ſtollen waters, and what it is to taſte the pleaſures of ſinne for a ſeaſon, O I am now in the flames; I have found a dart ſtricken thorough my liver, and *what haue I to doe any more with idols, Hoſea* 14. 8. If God will once heale my ſoule, and pardon me my ſin, I will not ſinne againſt him as I have done in time paſt, but I will take him for my God, and doe unto him all the poſſible ſervice for his honour that I can.

3. Cauſes of the wound in mans ſpirit, nine

For the grounds occaſioning the wound of the ſpirit in men, I finde them very different; and they are more generall, or ſpeciall and particular; I ſhall name ſome of them.

1. Sinne committed.

1. The wound in mans ſpirit

rit is causeſd by ſinne; if any thing diſhearten, feare and diſtreſſe the ſoule, it is ſinne; every ſinne committed and lying upon the conſcience is a wound to conſcience; *Now when you ſinne ſo againſt the brethren yee wound their conſcience*, ſaith *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 8. 12. whence I inferre, if another mans ſinne will wound another mans conſcience; then much more a mans owne ſinne will wound his owne conſcience; this is true, * that all mans miſerable and penall evills, whether inward or outward, doe follow his ſinfull evills; had there beene no ſinne there had beene no wound, and thus man is the entire cauſe of his owne wounding; if we be taſting of the forbidden fruit, ſucking at the pleaſures of ſin, and doe ſwallow downe the ſecret

* *Malum culpæ trahit malum pœnæ.*

Hoſea 13. 9.

cret poyſon thereof, no marvaile if it caſt our ſoules and ſpirits into paine, and vexation, and unſpeakeable ſtretchings and ſtrainings. Note, that as it is all ſinne in generall, ſo it is the greatneſſe, aggravations, and repetitions of ſome ſins in particular, which doe greatly wound conſcience within man, I meane, unnaturall ſins, ſuch as are ſinnes of blood, and ſins of uncleanneſſe: unreaſonable ſins committed contrary to the cleare light of reaſon, as ſinnes of Rebellion and Treaſon, found in *Achitophel* and *Iudas*: formall ſins, which is the ſlubbering over Gods ſervices out of cuſtome and for faſhion, when a man knoweth he ought to doe them with holineſſe of affection and highneſſe of reverence; locall ſins, the ſinnes of

What ſins do moſt of all wound conſcience

of a mans calling and place, ſuch as are idleneſſe, unfaithfullneſſe and unrighteouſneſſe in buying, ſelling, borrowing, lending, reſtoring and the like: ſins againſt vowes ſolemnely made againſt ſin, yea and ſins of repetition, men going over the ſame ſins often; all theſe and other the like ſinnes doe not a little wound conſcience in men.

2. The wound is cauſed by the ſenſible apprehenſion of the debt and guilt of ſin; guilt apprehended in depth is the greateſt wounding of conſcience that may be; when a man comes to know his tranſgreſſions, and to poſſeſſe the ſinnes of his youth, finding the faſtning of ſin in the venome of it upon his ſoule, this is the great maladie and diſeaſe of the ſoule, 2. Sin felt.

there is nothing so mortall and deadly as sin is, and there is nothing more terrible and troublesome then for a man to see himselfe a sinner without a Saviour, and to reade his own sins unto himselfe in an unpardonable manner; it is one thing to reade a sin in the Word, and another thing for the Word and conscience to make us to reade it in our selves in all the offence and danger and damnation of it, *Psal.* 51.3. *Iob* 13.25,26.

3. The Law over prest or over aplied.

The wound is caused by the over-taking of the threats and enforcements of the Law unto a mans selfe: the Law is terrible, and causeth the bondage of the spirit, putting a man to his deepest distresses, when as sinne and conscience doth meete and mingle with it.

There

There are two things about the Law causing the wound of ſpirit in man.

Two things about the Law.

1. One is, The unskilfull managing of it by the Miniſters, they preaching it without reference to the Goſpell, as it was delivered on Mount Sinai.

2. Another is, The overfaſtning of the Law in its terror and execration upon a mans ſelfe; the Law hath an extreame curſe written in it ſelfe; it renders up a man a ſinner to the ſeverity of Gods juſtice, and irreſiſtibility of his wrath, it powers in the fiery indignation of the Almighty, and acknowledgeth no Saviour at all. Now when a man ſhall write downe after the Law, that he is a man every way under the execration and exaction of the Law, this is the ſadneſſe and ſickneſſe

of his ſpirit, *Rom.7.9. When the Law came ſinne revived and I died.*

4. Taſting of divine wrath.

4. The wound is made by the taſting of divine wrath; when God is not felt in his love, but that there is a folding up the former intimations from the ſoule, there is a mighty wound in the ſpirit, as we may ſee in *David*, *Pſal.*77. the firſt 10. verſes; how much more horrible and wounding to the ſpirit is the apprehenſion of the angry and wrathfull face of God ſetting it ſelfe againſt a man? *Iobs* mind was exerciſed with this, and it was his wounding; *The arrowes of the Almighty are within mee, the poyſon whereof drinkes up my ſpirit, the terrors of God do ſet themſelves in array againſt mee*, &c. *Iob* 6.3,4.

5. The wound is made by the

the failing of teſtimonie from conſcience unto man upon repaire made unto it; the good or evill day of a Chriſtian is ſet by the voice of conſcience unto him: Now when conſcience is ſilent, and ſhall ſpeake neither good nor bad unto a Chriſtian, when as no teſtimony at all ſhall ſtand up, but after great and ſtudious enquiry no verdict can be obtained; this is a ſad wound to the ſpirit, and it doth exceedingly diſtract and divide a Chriſtian. Note the effects of conſcience in ſilence,

Failing of conſcience

The miſery of conſcience in ſilence in three things.

1. It giveth man but a negative eſtate, and that cannot ſatisfie and ſettle the ſoule; it is not enough to my quiet that God lookes not as mine enemy, but he muſt looke like a friend on mee.

2. It

2. It giveth ſuſpition of a neutrall eſtate, ſo as a man cannot tell whether God and conſcience be for him or againſt him.

3. It breeds a ſuſpition of a bad eſtate; withdrawments and ſuſpenſions are ſometimes the fore-runners of bitter intentions.

6. cuſations of conſcience

6. The wound is in the ſpirit from the overgreat accuſing power of conſcience; conſcience in its accuſations ſhewing the guiltineſſe of ſin, and expreſſing the anger of God towards a man for ſin: in a cheerefull and excuſing conſcience we may behold a gratious God accepting and acquitting us; in a ſilent conſcience we make God doubtfull, not knowing which way God is or will be unto us; and in an accuſing con-

Note.

conſcience wee doe behold an angry God, and our ſelves moſt miſerable creatures: when a Chriſtian ſhall be totally under the accuſations of conſcience, that his conſcience ſhall ſpeake nothing to him, but that his heart is baſe and vile, and that in ſuch and ſuch particular paſſages of his life he was not right and perfect, but hollow and hypocriticall, when I ſay conſcience ſhall thus charge ſin upon men; this is the time of their wounding, as wee may ſee in *Iudas*, *Mat.* 27.5.

7. Another thing which maketh the wound within us, is an evill jealouſie, and an over-hard opinion of our ſelves and eſtates towards God: Some men fall out with themſelves, and other men fall from themſelves; 7. Selfe jealouſies.

ſelves; ſhall I ſay that they cenſure themſelves, and charge themſelves falſely? concluding againſt a ſtate of grace, and charging themſelves with hypocriſie and inſincerity without juſt cauſe; Sure I am, this is too too frequent among Gods children, who upon ſuch grounds as theſe, doe miſ-judge themſelves, and thereby make too great a wound within their ſpirits: I ſay becauſe they finde within themſelves the want of ſuch meaſure of graces, and expreſſions of obedience which they once had, deſire to have, and ſee others have; when they ſee within themſelves a partiall and temporary indiſpoſednesſe unto ſpirituall required duties; when as gifts and graces for a time lie hid and dead in reſpect of

of vigour and ſenſible operations: when all endeavours ſeeme to be fruitleſſe, and a Chriſtian finds to his ſeeming the ordinances to go and come without all life and power unto him, paſſing no influence of bettering into his ſoule. Now hee ſits him downe in griefe; and the ſoule begins not onely to miſgive or miſtruſt it ſelfe; but to queſtion the truth of all, and it not only feares, but concludes that ſurely the hands were waſhed in vaine, and whatſoever hath beene done in religion and in the ſervice of God, it hath beene done in hypocriſie, *Pſal.* 73. 13. and can you conceive how deepely this doth wound the ſpirit of a man?

8. A next thing greatly wounding to the ſpirit of man

is

New risings of old sins.

is the new risings of old sins: I meane when those sins which long since were committed, and long since bewailed, and long since renounced, and we long since did obtaine within our hearts some comfortable assurance of their pardon, do meete us in their guilt not yet remooved, as a debt not yet discharged, and as an evill not yet thoroughly healed, this causeth miserable trouble within the soule, and upon this, these conceits fall in; Surely this sin of mine is not pardoned, why would God remember it? Surely there was but a skinning over the soare, my heart was never healed by Sanctification; how could it be that my sins should haunt mee againe, this is now the sickenesse and death of many a soule.

9. Lastly,

9. Laſtly, I conceive that this maketh the wound in the ſpirit of man, the want of ſome deſired good; it is not the abſence of good generally conſidered which maketh the ſpirit to be wounded; for there are ſuch whoſe unfeelingneſſe is ſuch, that they have no ſenſe of ſinne, nor of any ſpirituall want lying upon them; but that which maketh the wound of the ſpirit to a man is this, when his wants are preſented unto him, and their ſupplies are ſuſpended and denied; the ſoule would have mercy, and mercy is denied him; he would have eaſe, and he ſeekes it, and yet he is kept in miſery: when a mans prayers makes not their returnes, but a man calles and none anſwers; comforts delayed or denied do breake the heart, and greatly wound the heart.

9. Want of ſome good deſired.

I passe on to the next point,

Doct. 3. The wound suffered yet not borne.

That a wounded spirit is a burden insupportable by the sonnes of men; no man can beare it; men must suffer and endure the perplexities thereof, but beare it (that is) to sustaine a mans selfe under it, no man can, this wound cannot be borne with ease, so as men enduring and feeling it, should make nothing of it; but it is with great difficulty and disquietment. A burning feaver carrying with it the inflammation of the spirits is not borne without much sense and horror; so a wounded spirit even by the stoutest of spirits cannot be borne then with strongest and strangest torments, men must yeeld themselves unto it, and lie downe under it of necessity; nay it is a wound unsupporta-

A twofold bearing.

1. With ease.

2. With difficulty.

Simile.

ble

ble to all men that are vexed with it; there is no withſtanding this wound by any man, nor any ſtanding under it by any man; unto bad men it hath beene unſupportable; O how grievous was it unto *Caine*, who cries out, *My puniſhment is more then I can beare, Gen.*4.13. *Iudas* out of the trouble felt by it, hangs himſelfe to be rid out of it, *Mat.*27.4. many thorough the weight and torment of it, have beene forced to throw themſelves downe from high mountaines, to ſtabb, and poyſon, and drowne themſelves; nay unto good men, whoſe grace and ſtrength was great and much, this wound hath beene wounding, witneſſe *David*, *Pſal.* 32.3,4. *Hezekiah*, *Ezek.*38.13,14. and holy *Iob* in his whole Hiſtory, and Chriſt

The burden is too great.
1. To good men.
2. To bad men.

Christ himselfe suffering this wound (without sin) in his humane spirit, cryed out under its burden, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken mee?* and it cannot be otherwise, if we consider these reasons.

Reasons prooving the burden of a wounded conscience are seaven

1. First, a wounded spirit is a burden unto it selfe, *why hast thou set mee as a marke against thee, so that I am a burden unto my selfe,* saith *Iob* 7.20. Now all wounds and burdens that are extrinsecall a mans spirit can beare, but that which lieth within it selfe it cannot; you know if the ship be whole the waves doe onely beate against the side, they onely threaten, they sinke her not; but if shee have a crack and leake within her selfe, she cannot endure the stirrings of the winds, nor tossings of the waves, but doth easily

Simile.

ſily make her ſelfe her owne grave; thus it is with conſcience, it cannot be both patient and burden, and under all wounds it ſelfe being wounded, it is that which makes the burden inſupportable.

Secondly, there is no outward thing which can relieve a wounded ſpirit, it is not all the gold of the Indies, nor all the favour of Princes, nor all the friends on earth that can aſſwage or cure this wound; a troubled mind impaireth health, drieth up the blood, waſteth the marrow, pines away the fleſh, conſumes the bones, and makes all pleaſures painefull to a man; nothing doth comfort it, but terrifie it; the light doth not comfort him, would God ſaith he it were night; the darkneſſe doth terrifie 2.

rifie him, his ſleep forſakes him, and his dreames doe not pleaſe him, he lieth on his bed boyling in diſquietneſſe and wiſheth for day: conſcience can relieve againſt all wounds but its owne. Suppoſe the wound to lie in a mans honour, friends, and eſtate, conſcience can heale all that, but it ſelfe being wounded in the leaſt degree, it is beyond the cure and comfort of all outward things; we have a ſaying, that no borrowing part can helpe the lending part; what helpe can the hand returne unto the heart? if I wound my hand the heart can yeeld helpe; if the nerves which draw more inwardly be wounded, yet the heart can helpe, it hath blood and ſpirits and heate enough; but if the heart it ſelfe be wounded what ſhall helpe?

Simile.

Third-

Thirdly, the ſpirit under its wounds retaineth the ſenſibleneſſe of unpardoned guilt, which of all things is moſt raging, and makes the ſoule moſt comfortleſſe; when a man ſhall apprehend his ſinnes to be unpardonable, or unpardoned, it keepes him in a perpetuall rowling and boyling, it is a condition that can no way be endured, for ſinne lieth ſtill at the doore haunting and vexing a man. 3.

Fourthly, a ſpirit that is wounded hath to deale with the mighty and irreſiſtible power of God; now the ſtrength of any burden is according to the ſtrength of him with whom wee have to deale; under the wound of conſcience God is following his owne cauſe with his owne arguments, 4.

ments, and hee is now avenging the wrong that is done to his mercy and patience, and is it possible for the creature to sustaine it selfe? can we imagin any enabling against Gods pressure and power? a man while he is to deale with men may beare up himselfe, and he may have much strength of wit or impudencie of face to outface all enquiries, but when men are to deale with an all-seeing, and an all-knowing, and an all-sinne revenging God, the might of whose glory is able to confound men and Angels, if he once shall start up our guilts, and breake into our soules; if he send a trembling heart, and sorrowfull mind; if himselfe be witnesse against us, and by his power imprison and shut us up, we cannot avoid it,

or

or beare it; time will not eaſe us, company will not eaſe us, place will not eaſe us, when he wounds none can heale but himſelfe.

Fifthly, the wound of the ſpirit is accompanied with the accuſations of conſcience; conſcience cannot be bribed or put off, there is no flying from it; the ſtrength of conſcience is awakened, and her cruelty roareth, conſcience under wounding doth arraigne, evidence, condemne, and bind over unto eternall wrath for ſin; and it is of an indefatigable, unreſiſtible and unavoidable power in working, a man by flight, or death, or friends, may eſcape the Magiſtrates hand, but by neither can he poſſibly ever eſcape from a diſpleaſed conſcience, a tormented conſcience cannot

flie from God, nor can a man flie from it.

6. Sixthly, the wound of spirit is of an eternall nature, all other wounds end in death, and are therefore the more tollerable because they be temporall, but this wound endeth not in death, if it be not gratiously cured, it is the beginning of hell upon earth unto the wicked, and it continues him in hell upon earth, and after death, it is that worme which still is gnawing and never dying; death is not the end of this misery, and this maketh it the more intollerable to be borne, what heart can possibly sustaine it selfe under infinite and endlesse miseries.

7. Seventhly and lastly, when and whilst men are under the wounds of conscience, Satan is strongly

strongly and subtely working; such is Satans cowardize that he takes us at the weakest, and such is his malice that hee will yet weaken us wee being weakened already; Satan falling in with the bruisings and sores of mens soules, and bringing in the fretting gall of hell, and powring forth the sharpest vineger of most violent objections, the soule tortured and the wound enlarged, and conscience overcharged; Satan now tells the sinner of the impossibility of mercy, and uncapablenesse of the bloud of Christ, hee now followeth him with strange endictments, representations, and conclusions, yea and arguments of insincerity and hypocrisie, and this adds to the weight and maketh the burden intollerable; there is no such

trouble as to be daily troubled with the divell.

Having thus opened the wound unto you, and its burden, I shall fall upon the Application of both, in this manner:

Vse 1. First, be wise to know the woundednesse of your spirits, and to consider what is your condition thereby. I presse you to this the rather upon these grounds,

1. Because a multitude of men are under searednesse and senslesnesse of conscience, 2 *Tim* 4. 2. they are dead and sleepie, their spirits never moove or worke within them, and let mee tell you, that a wounded spirit is infinitely beyond a dead spirit; a troubled conscience is a mercy in respect of a seared conscience; conscience in trouble may happily

A seared spirit is worse then a wounded spirit.

proove

proove conſcience in goodneſſe and peace, and a cure may follow it: when iron is put into the fire it may be made pliable and receive another impreſſion, and ſo we doe not know what may be the good iſſue of a wounded ſpirit unto man; but you cannot hope this of conſcience continuing under ſearednesſe. *Simile.*

2. Becauſe men ordinarily take leaſt notice of their ſpirituall wounds in their cauſe and cure; they are lumpiſh and heavie, full of ſad thoughts & evill imaginations, and many times they roare and complaine, but this is their ignorance, they know not what ailes them; they are ſo miſtaken in the cauſe and buſineſſe in hand, that they judge themſelves to be under ſome bodily diſtempers by melancholie Men doe miſtake the ſpirits wound.

passions, and other violent humours, a great madnesse and ignorance in men; and being fallen upon this point, let mee tell you that melancholy prevailing in men doth come very neere to the trouble of conscience, but it is not the wound of conscience here spoken of; Satan makes it his bait, and man makes it his burden, but wee may not make it this wound; concerning which I shall yeeld you two things,

The operation of melancholie in man

1. That melancholy given way unto doth corrupt the imagination, and those actions of the minde or the next instruments by which the minde worketh, that therewith, the heart, affections, and conscience are greatly distempered with feare and griefe, and doe conceive a many unechewable miseries

sotias against it, suits against which fancies and imaginations, nor arguments of reason can prevaile, and this darkning vapour and blackish fume thus affecting the soule, doth add torment unto it, making it for the time incapable of the sense of comfort. I say this humour of melancholy hath very subtile spirits that flie up into the braine, and the instrument of discretion and there they lodge their contagious qualities, which corrupt the spirits, and annoy both heart and braine; whence arise strange imaginations and fancies in the head. Head and heart having entercourse, and body and soule being united, the soule is not thereby a little troubled.

Thus what ever vaine men judge melancholy is not a spirituall

Melancholy is not the wounded spirit, proved by five reasons.

rituall maladie, or the wounded spirit here spoken of; the difference betweene both is great; as

1. In the ground and cause, the troubles of melancholy ariseth either from naturall causes in the body, or from supposed and fained causes, the imagination conceiving things to be so and so, when indeed nothing is really so; the trouble of conscience ariseth from the sight and sense of sin in the soule, the apprehension of divine wrath due to man for sin and such like spirituall and reall causes.
2. In the seate of it; troubles from melancholy seate themselves in the head

head and naturall ſpi-
rits, the man having loſt
the right uſe of his wits,
and being miſtaken in
his imagination, in con-
ceits becomming mon-
ſtrous; true trouble is
in the conſcience and
whole ſoule of man.

3. In the cure of it; phyſick
may cure the one, it being
a bodily diſeaſe or di-
ſtemper; but it is not all
artificiall and naturall
meanes that can cure the
wounds of the ſpirit.

4. In the effects of it; me-
lancholy maketh a man
ſimple and abſurd in his
thoughts touching him-
ſelfe; ſuch men will
ſpeake to you and yet
conceive themſelves to
be without head or

heart and life; they will tell you that they see Divels, and feele Divels within them; and you shall heare many odd things from them, when as trouble of conscience looseth not it selfe, but speakes according to the truth and feeling of it selfe.

5o In the enlargement of it; melancholy seldome or never worketh griefe for Gods dishonour; it is not touched with sorrow for sin, and when it is cured, it gives not a man any ground and measure of spirituall joy; it enforceth not a man to Christ for ease and rest; it quickens no man to prayer and duty;

all

all which the wounds of the spirit in some men do more mightily and savingly work upon them.

Thirdly and lastly, let us know our selves rightly in our troubles of mind, and we shall the better know our selves in our comforts; nothing doth so prepare the heart for comforts, and make us to relish our comforts as the sense of sinful trouble and heavinesse: good Dauid after that he once did know and finde out his spirituall wants and wounds more, wee would, and should withall be more upon the wayes and workings of comfort then we are.

Vse 2. Secondly, let us have compassion of such as are wounded in spirit: you see what such is the weight of their wounds, as neither eye [illegible] *hath*

hath heard, or tongue of man is able fully to expresse, none can in any way of expression speake of it, but such as have more or lesse felt it; and shall we passe by any that are labouring under this burden not yeelding them our pitie? 'tis a foolish madnesse in many to thinke this sicknesse and this wound to be but passion, conceit, and mopishnesse put into their heads by reading good books, or hearing some strict Preachers, or melancholy; and because it often changeth the body, they think it ariseth from the body, and what need all this adoe about it? it is cursed cruelty in any to looke upon any labouring under this wound, crying out against them, censuring of them for hypocrites, and in thought sentencing them to hell, blaspheming their God

God and their religion; O you ignorant men learne better and be now instructed.

Considerations for the pitying of wounded in soule.

1. That there is no disease for symptomes and torments like unto this; all other maladies are naturall, but this is supernaturall; they come from the constitution of the body, this of the soule; in them the humours first, in this the conscience first, and humours last are distempered; they may all be cured by naturall remedies, the body may be brought to a fit temperature; but it is not all the medicines under heaven that are meerely naturall can cure or comfort here.

2. That it is an argument of an unsanctified and stony heart within man to disregard, take, or censure men under the miseries of inward perplexities, you being

ing merciless and wanting tenderness and experience cannot pittie them aright.

5. Blessed are such as judge wisely of such poore soules, and do labour to relieve their soules in their woundings: this is a worke of mercy indeed, and a sinesse becomming the most excellent of Christians; Christ himselfe received his annointing, and was sent of God to bind up the broken hearted, *Esay* 61. 1, 2, 3. Ministers have the tongue of the learned given them to speake a word of comfort to such whose soules are wearie, *Esay* 50. 4. and shall not we that are Christians comfort the feeble minded, and support the weake, 1 *Thes.* 5. 14. bearing one anothers burden: O let us pity such, and pray earnestly to God for such,

Motives to pittie and to relieve wounded Christians

ſuch, conſidering our owne caſe, *Gal.6.1.* would we not be prayed for were we in their conditions?

Thirdly, how thankefull ſhould all Chriſtians be for their freedome from this great burden of a wounded ſpirit; tell mee, are you ſet at liberty, and is all peace and reſt within, are the bands of the diſtreſſe broken? would ſt thou be under the ſame eſtate againe, to feele thoſe hells and ſorrowes which once were endured by thee? No ſurely, than ſtirre up thy heart to bleſſe thy God who hath taken off this heavie burden from thy ſoule; bleſſe him daily and duely, a man can never be thankefull enough for the eaſe and freedome of his ſpirit; ſome men walke with ſenſeleſſe ſpirits, and

Vſe 3.

and they blesse God that they were never troubled in mind all the daies of their life; some men walk with wounds in their spirits, and would give all the world did they enjoy it for freedome and ease, and shall any man enjoy the liberty and peace of his conscience from God and yet walke without joy and praise; it well becommeth men healed of their wounds, out of that ease and liberty they have obtained to be very joyfull and thankefull.

Vse 4. Fourthly, to learne us in holy feare and care least that wee should bring this heavie and insupportable wound upon our selves: naturally wee shun all pænall evills, and dread the plunging of our selves into distresses; know that wee have

said

ſaid enough; it is a burden that none can beare, thinke not out of your ignorance and pride to outface conſcience, or that ever you ſhall be able to ſtand under the burden of its wounds: it will amaze you, and bring you downe; and therefore ſtrive to avoid the pangs and paines of it; and to this purpoſe

Firſt, know that conſcience within, is a moſt tender part which will be ſoone troubled and wounded.

Secondly, know that conſcience troubled is a moſt vexing part; if a man trouble his eye, his eye will trouble him; and ſo it is here, all the vexations will be unto our ſelves. *Simile.*

Thirdly, know that conſcience under wounds is pining and will languiſh it ſelfe unto death, *Prov.* 12. 25.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, consider how apt men are to wound conscience, and they doe it many waies: well then, follow this counsell.

Six rules for the keeping of the wounds of spirit.

1. Make no adventures upon sin; for a man to make light of the least sin, and impudently or improvidently to hazard his soule upon the occasions of sin, is the readie way to wound the spirit: there are too too many who out of a secret confidence of their selfe maintenance doe object their soules upon sinfull companies; they doe as many men that goe out of their houses well and sound, but home they are brought all gored and wounded: in like manner, sinfull occasions have the advantage of us, and will soone wound us, let us not proudly presume of our owne

strength,

ſtrength, 'tis not the largeneſſe of our judgements, or fullneſſe of our graces, or the peremptorineſſe of our reſolutions that can keepe us (preſuming) from foiles and wounds by ſin; ſuch as make nothing of ſin ſhall ſoone be wounded and darted by ſin.

2. Seeke not outward pleaſures too much; excesſe of pleaſures, broad-eaſtſyde trembling and ſadneſſe of ſpirit; ſuch men do pierce themſelves thorough and thorough with many ſorrowes who doe affect a way of worldly delight, and will take their fill of pleaſures; who ſo will have the Bee muſt have his ſting alſo, and if wee will laugh and be merry beyond meaſure, wee ſhall lie downe and howle for vexation of ſpirit; doe not ſo vainely

bathe

bathe your selves in carnall delights and worldly recreations; the worldlings pastime is the deadnesse and wound of a Christians conscience.

3. Beware of formality and remissenesse in holy services: the Ordinances not rightly used doe wound exceedingly; how vexing is the word to a formall and carnall Christian? did any man fall off, grow cold, and begin to dead his heart to the meanes and duties, but his heart at the last was greatly wounded for it; the neglect of Christ by the Church, when his voice did seeme unseasonable and inopportune unto her, was punished by her spirituall wounding, *Cant.* 5. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

4. Nourish no hypocrisie or guile within you, doe not colour sin with faire pretences,

and

and plaiſter over a foule heart with an outſide profeſſion, ſerve not graven images when you pretend a ſervice unto God, if you doe ſo, know that it will feſter to a ſore, and make ſuch a wound, which will proove the great diſquietment of your ſoules; Satan would have faſtened this hypocriſie on *Iob*, to have aggravated his miſery; and he well knoweth that hypocriſie is wounding.

5. Goe not on in ſinnefull waies againſt generall or particular convictions; there are who have ſuch abundance of love to ſin in them, that they will be wicked againſt the light of knowledge and the dictate of conſcience, it is not the knowledge they have of evill, nor the riſings up and reproofes of conſcience within them for evills

evills which can hold them of from evill; but on they goe, and wickedly they will doe, now as this prooves an aggravation of sin; so it maketh the wound very deepe; if knowledge and conscience hold us not of from sin, it will hold on sin, piercing the marrow, and vitals of the spirit; *David* went against as great light as any man did, and did not his sins proove wounding sinnes, breaking his bones and heart? and so will thine too.

6. Keepe your selves in the waies of duty, walking in every action according to the rule, and peace shall be upon your spirits, *Gal.* 6. 16. I say the more holy and unblameable a man is, the more strict a man is with himselfe in keeping himselfe under the law of religion, the more

more assured peace and soundnesse shall he finde within his conscience; *The waies of wisedome are waies of pleasantnesse, and all her paths are peace, yea and the keeping of sound wisedome and discretion shall be life unto our soules, Prov. 3. 17. 22.* I assure you that duties conscionably, sincerely, and constantly performed, do keep up the soule in life and joy.

Vse 5. Firstly, continue not your selves under the wounds of conscience; there is a strange cruelty which Gods children doo offer unto themselves, in keeping the wound upon the soule alwaies fresh and bleeding, whereby they lie longer under it then they need so doe; I shall touch upon the waies and grounds of continuing the wound of conscience on a mans selfe.

Men doe continue themselves under their spirituall wounds six waies.

1. Want

1. Want of ſeaſonable counſell and comfort; when men do hide their wounded eſtate, and will not repaire to appointed comforts and comforters, this doth not onely enlarge the wound, but feſtle it; as we ſee in bodily wounds, if they want a timely looking too, it is the longer before that they heale; the caſe is ſo here, delaies breed dangers: and we are ſpeedily to make inteo our remedies, do not ſleight the left wound as many doe, who at the firſt make nothing of it; but ſet upon the cure as ſoone as you eſpie the wound; the medicine is prepared before hand, and phyſitians to apply it are at hand; onely take you heed of a ſinfull baſhfullneſſe, and dumbe divell, and curſed negligence, cry not out when it is too late.

2. Recourſe

2. Recourſe unto contrary medicines; there are many falſe and deluding medicines unto conſcience; and there are many medicines which are vertuall, but yet not ſutable, all medicines heale not all diſeaſes; wee ſee in experience in bodily wounds which are but ſmall and little to looke to, if that a contrary medicine be applied to it, it doth enrage it, and increaſe it, and continue it many times unto the death of the patient; and thus if men in and under their ſpirituall wounds will runne to the uſe of ſuch druggs and playſters which may onely for a time damme up the ſenſe, but not make up the wound, they may long and long continue under the wound, and cry out of their wounds; you may no more

Simile.

thinke to heale the ſpirit by ſin, then by adding piles of wood to extinguiſh flaming fire; beleeve me, it was not *Sauls* muſick which could tune his jarring ſpirit, nor *Belſhazzars* cups which could blot out the ſenſe of the ſecret hand-writing; it is not your mad mirth, or joviall companions, or worldly imployments that can take of your ſadneſſe of ſpirit; they may put of ſome horror for the preſent, but they double horrors in their returne; even as cold water doth the heate in a burning feaver.

3. Illneſſe of diet; diet is much in continuing of bodily wounds; there are meates and drinkes which men muſt abſtaine from, if that they intend to be cured: and 'tis as true in the ſpirituall Surgerie, if that we

wee enlarge our deſires after forbidden fruit, and delight to feed upon ſinfull husks, and will be doing that we ſhould not, we may thanke our ſelves for the ſmart of our wounds; is it the way to be rid of a wound to vexe it, and to feed contrary to it?

4. Selfe-niceneſſe; men are many times ſo tender and indulgent toward themſelves, that they will be healed only by ſoft words, and the covering of a faire cloth, they will not ſubmit themſelves unto the painefull ſearchings of the Law; but they are in this cruell to themſelves, and out of ſelfe favouring doe make their miſery larger and longer.

5. The life of ſence; which is open to all winds, and the keeping open of all wounds with-

in the ſoule, my meaning is this; that when Chriſtians do place the diſpoſition of God towards them, and judge of themſelves according to the condition of their owne feelings and ſenſible apprehenſions; this is that which doth greatly keepe up the wound of the ſpirit; for now the ſoule being under its ebbings, and finding the channell in a manner drie, ſo as he cannot ſee what hee was wont to behold; begins thus to reaſon, ſurely God is not my God in grace and mercy, for I cannot finde him in his love to me as I was wont to doe; which condition is full of ſuſpenſe and feare and doubting, and muſt needs continue the wound.

6. Harkning unto Satan; if a man doe beleeve the divels teſtimony and information touching

ching his eſtate and condition, and take up all his ſpeech upon truſt for truth, he ſhall keepe himſelfe in bleeding wounds, the more Satan doth tamper with our condition, and take upon him to judge of our ſins, and ſervices, and temper and ſtanding, the more ſad and doubtfull will our condition be. I ſay if we ſhall put the iſſue of our condition upon the determination of Satan, and all his interpretations and deciſions ſhall be goſpell with us, Lord how ſhall we be toſſed too and fro? and where there is no reſt, how can there be the healing of the wound?

Quit your ſelves as ſpeedily as you can from the wounded ſpirit; I ſpeake to all ſuch who labour under this wounded ſpirit; 1. Do not you unwiſely *Vſe 6.*

caſt off all hope of cure, and deſpairingly conclude againſt all your comforts; know 1. That the beſt of Gods Saints have beene under the grievouſneſſe of this wound, and that in as fearfull and terrible a manner as any of you can poſſibly be, and they have received their cures: 2. That the greateſt of our ſpirituall wounds (ſuppoſe them to be more ſetled and permanent wounds) are capable of cure, and may be cured, God which hath healed this wound in many of his deare children, and is the wiſe and able Phyſitian for his people, can and will heale all the wounds of our ſpirits, and it matters not how great and grievous the wound be, if God be Surgeon, *Ier.* 17. 14. *Hoſea* 6. 1. he can heale one as

Three meanes to get out of our wounded eſtate.

as well as another, and all wounds aſſoone as any, and therefore ſay not my ſpirit is greatly wounded; but riſe up to the cure, and learne in the next place

2. To be willing of cure; I know that there can be no pleaſure in ſtaying under wounds unto any wiſe man; yet as many are ignorant of the true remedies, ſo many are very unwilling to uſe thoſe remedies provided and preſcribed for their cure; wee finde in ſome people ſuch refuſals of offered comforts; ſuch ſleightings of able counſels; yea and ſuch ſhunnings of ſoule-ſearchings, that it makes us to feare them, and of many of them we may ſay, wee would have cured *Babell*, but ſhe would not be cured, *Ier.* 51. 9. and reſt not heere but

There are five things to be done if wee doe intend the curing of our wounded spirits 1. Open the wound

Thirdly, learne to follow the waies and meanes prescribed for your healing; there is balme in *Gilead*, and a poole at *Bethesda*, and Physitians enough among us, onely we must take the course, and addresse our selves

1. Unto the opening and searching of the wound; it is not enough that we have a view of our wound in generall, seeing that we are sicke and aile ill, but we must finde out the particular maladie in the speciall reason of it; and therefore you must suffer the Ministers of God to goe to the quick, and to launce and lay open all; there is a holy incision to be made into the wound of the spirit by Gods Law, this doth finde out and open the particular hidden and malevolent humour of the

the ſoule, and it is your duty to let the Law into your hearts, that ſo it may have its perfect worke; bleſſe God for a ſearching Miniſterie, and deliver up your ſelves to that word which maketh moſt inquiſition into your wound; the word that doth moſt wound you for the preſent, it will by Gods bleſſing be a meanes of the after curing of you.

2. Unto the waſhing and cleanſing of the wound; there is a great deale of filth that falls into mans ſpirit in the wounding thereof, which of neceſſity muſt be waſhed away, or no cure will follow; whoſo is not willing to be rid of ſinne (that as extreame filthineſſe doth lodge within him) hee ſhall never receive the right cure of his ſpirituall wound;

2. Waſh the wound

it is ſinne which is the core of the ulcer; O remoove it in the guilt of it, and remoove it in the filth of it; get the waſhing of Juſtification, and of Sanctification into thy ſoule, and doubt not but thou ſhalt be cured.

1. Apply the playſter.

3. Unto the laying on of the all-healing plaiſter upon the wound; it is the plaiſter in application that is healing; Chriſts blood was ſhed to heale broken ſpirits, *Eſay* 61. 1,2,3. & 53. 6. *He is that Sun of righteouſneſſe that hath healing under his wings*, *Mal.* 4. 2. that blood alone can aſſwage all our ragings, and heale all our woundings; now then, make a ſeaſonable application of that blood to your wounded ſoules, ſprinkle with his blood your wounded ſpirits; God alone is pacified

pacified, if the blood of Chriſt be ſprinkled, and conſcience doth heale when God is reconciled; O that we would ſet our ſelves by faith into the dying and bleedings of Chriſt; a man muſt earneſtly labour to beleeve that Chriſt doth and will ſatisfie for thoſe ſinnes which breed the terror within; and this will proove the curing and the comforting of his heart, as we may ſee, *Act.* 16.31.

4. Unto the daily openings and dreſſings of the wound; it is a neceſſary thing for the ſoule to be venting it ſelfe into full and frequent confeſſions of ſin; there is a need of letting out the filthy matter that the wound in healing gathereth, if that we expect quiet; keep in ſin, and you keep on your trouble; but

4. Dreſſe it daily.

Note.

but let out the filthy matter and eaſe will follow; it is an eaſing thing to be much in acknowledgement of ſin to God, and to accuſe a mans ſelfe of ſin before God; we ſee *David* found it ſpecially curing unto him, *Pſal.* 32.3,5. And beſides this, there muſt be the renewing of our repentance and godly ſorrow for ſins committed; ſinfull wounds are deepe wounds, and great ſins call for great ſorrowes; *David* was wholy in teares, and *Peter* weepes bitterly; and wee muſt be conſtant in repenting, if wee expect a compleate and comfortable cure. And laſtly we muſt lay open all our ſores before the Lord in prayer; *Davids ſore ran and ceaſed not, and yet in the day of his trouble hee ſought the Lord, and he prayed when his ſpirit was full of anguiſh,*

*guiſh. Pſal.*77.2,3. and thus muſt we doe, wee muſt come unto God with all our ſinnes and ſoares craving healing from him; who will heale us in his owne time, and by his owne meanes, *Hoſea* 6.1. & 14.4.

5. Unto the upholdments of our ſpirits, under all the dreſſings of its wounds; wee are very apt to faint in the thought of diſtreſſes; but when wee are felt and dreſt, and dealt withall in a moſt healing way, wee are ready to qualme and ſinke, ſo that it doth very much concerne us to have our cordials and reſtoratives neare us, ſuch as are the ſweet and precious promiſes of the Covenant of grace; wee muſt ſet our ſelves under grace, and beleeve that God hath a good opi-

5. Proviſion.

Note.

opinion of us, and that his love is towards us; wee must set up the saving vertue of Christs blood against the damming power of sinne; wee must eye Gods acceptance of weake endeavours, and passing by of many failings, we must conclude that a state of love may be under the sense of much wrath, and that though the paine for the present be much and great, yet it is sanctified, and God will put an end unto it for good unto such as are his in Covenant. This if wee could wisely doe, wee should keepe downe the risings of uncomfortable thoughts, and cease so much talking of our paine, and making complaint thereof, and happily attaine to the curing of the wounds of our spirits, the greatest of mercies, and the

the ground of ſingular rejoycing; becauſe the wounds of the ſpirit are ſo intollerable and unſufferable as I have opened unto you.

Eight Caſes of Conſcience opened for the relievement of wounded ſpirits.

IT now remaineth that I open unto you ſome of the things which are greatly wounding unto mans ſpirit; and yeeld unto you ſuch relievements againſt them, as Caſes of conſcience doe require, a work requiring both experimentall knowledge, and the tongue of the Learned, unto which I acknowledge my ſelfe inſufficient,

ent, yet having found the good proofe of these following directions in the comforting of many soules already, I am the more encouraged to communicate them unto you in a more publique way, and the blessing of the Almighty go along with them.

CASE. I.

Of the suspension of divine favour.

Case 1. The absence of Gods love in sense is a great trouble.

THe first thing which I shall speake of as greatly wounding and troubling the spirits of Gods children, is the absence of God in the sense, and feeling of his loving kindnesse; all absences of God (suppose them to

to be longer or ſhorter, inward, or outward;) trouble Chriſtians exceedingly; if *Caine* could make it diſtraction unto him when he was caſt out of Gods viſible preſence, *Gen.*4.15,16. If *Mary* weepe becauſe that they had taken away her Lord and ſhee knew not where that they had laid him, *Iohn* 20.13. how much more wounding unto Chriſtians is the ſuſpenſion of divine favour? the ſoule cannot lie under the ſenſe of Gods diſpleaſure and withdrawments of his love without much alteration and affliction. The life of a Chriſtian is much after the life of ſome great Favourite in the Court, whoſe comforts or diſcomforts depend upon the countenance, or diſcountenance of his Prince; or as it is with the Marigold, which *Simile.*

which opens and shuts with the Sun; just thus all the while the love of God shines upon a Christian, so as he is able to apprehend it, he lives, and is very chearefull in spirit; the sense of divine love is a spring of joy, a well of consolation, and the admirable refreshment of the soule; [a] *thy favour is life*, [b] *thy loving kindnesse is better then life*, saith *David*, this was it that gave unto him exceeding joy of heart, *Psal.*4.6,7. The Church sate under the shadow of Christ with great delight, and his fruit was sweet unto her taste, *Cant.*2.3. The enjoyment of this love is the day and joy of a Christian. But now if that there be a withdrawment or clouding or restraining of the love of God unto sense; let God (I say) but hide his face, and

a Psal 30. 5.
b Psal. 63. 3.

and ſeeme to forget and forſake his; let him but cover himſelfe with a cloud, and abſent himſelfe for a time, covering his with his wrath and juſt diſpleaſure, now 'tis all night and darkeneſſe, yea and death it ſelfe unto Chriſtians; as you may ſee in theſe Scriptures of experience, *Pſal.* 30.7. 88.14. 44.24. 77.3,7,8,9. 13.1. 31.22. *Lam.* 3.18. & 42,43,44. *Eſa.* 45.15. 49.14. *Jonah* 2.4. And all this is by reaſon of that conjunction and relation that is betweene God and them, and the wonderfull ſweetneſſe and joy wherewithall they were filled and refreſhed in the daies of their apprehenſion of divine love; things in conjunction are difficult in their ſeparation; a loving wife cannot long endure the abſence of her kind

Reaſon.

Simile. kind husband; but his departure from her in displeasure is intollerable and insufferable by her; a naturall and ingenious childe makes all his fathers withdrawments bitter unto him, even an *Absolom* that had no goodnesse in him, was troubled with his fathers withholding the wonted signes of his favour in banishing him from his presence, and can wee imagine but that when God turnes his backe, departs in displeasure, keepes himselfe darkened and unseene (that not so much as the least comfortable view of his countenance can be espied) changeth the set of his countenance, and folds up all the former intimations of love and favour from the sense and apprehension of his children, this is the wounding,

ding, the unſetling and the caſting downe of the ſpirit; I dare affirme, that all outward dignities and revenues which God doth caſt upon Chriſtians in variety and plenty in this condition, will nothing availe to comfort them; divine ſuſpenſions are divine deſertions, and when God is diſpleaſed with a man, which of all the creatures can comfort him? the Moone looſeth her light when the face of the Sun is intercepted; and God taking away his love, the light of comfort is taken away alſo, and Chriſtians are left unto themſelves in woe and miſery: let mee tell you:

The greatneſſe of this trouble.

Simile.

Cauſes of the trouble three.

1. That times of ſuſpenſion are times of ſtirring tentations; God is no ſooner abſent, but Satan is preſent and combating

bating with Christians; if God withdraw from *Iob*, the Divell will set on with eagernesse.

2. That times of suspensions are times of greatest suspitions, now feares and jealousies and doubtings doe arise within men.

3. That under all the withdrawments of Gods favour, there is eminent disquietnesse and enlargednesse of sorrowes; the * very bowels of the Church was troubled for the absence of Christ, *Cant.* 5. 4. and the absence of a God, the fountaine of all good, goeth to the heart of a Christian, for now the light and comfort of heaven is wanting.

* *Visceribus frementibus.*

This is the miserable condition of Gods children under the suspension of divine favour; But you will aske mee what relievement

lievement may be affoorded to Christians whose spirits are under this trouble?

Releevements to soules under the suspension of Gods love.

Unto such men I shall propose these foure directions.

I.

First deepely to judge themselves for the loosing or suspending causes of divine favour; the love of God unto his in himself is unchangeable; if there be any change of it unto us, wee may thanke our selves for it; there is an occasion given from man to God, or God would never withdraw his love from man, setting him wholly under his wrath and anger; God by way of punishment of former unthankfullnesse, unchearefullnesse, unprofitablenesse, and undutifullnesse doth withdraw himselfe from his owne deare children; their sinnes are the cloudes which hide his face,

folding up the blessed light of his countenance; these shut the doore, draw the curtaines, cause the ecclipse, and make the wall of separation betweene God and his; men in sinning forsake God, and God for sinne doth forsake men, leaving them to themselves forsaken of all comforts, and feeling miserable wrath; wee see how *Davids* great sins did suspend the comfortable presence of God for a time from his soule, *Psal.* 51. 11, 12. and the Church acknowledgeth, *Thou hast hid thy face from us, and consumed us, because of our iniquities*, *Esa.* 64. 7. and the Prophet tells us, *Your iniquities have separated betweene you and your God, and your sinnes have made him hide his face from you*, *Esa.* 59. 2. Though God takes not away his favour totally

totally and finally, though he doth not caſt away his utterly, damning them eternally; yet the ſins of his are ſet before him, even their ſecret ſins in the *light of his countenance*, *Pſal.* 90. 8. for which ſinnes of theirs it doth become them ſeriouſly and ſoundly to judge themſelves; you muſt therefore learne to bewaile the loſſe of divine favour more in the cauſe of it, then miſery by it; when *Iſrael* heard that God would not go up in the midſt of them, *they mourned and no man did put on his ornaments*; and ſurely an humble ſubmiſſion of our ſelves to God, in the confeſſion of our provoking and diſpleaſing ſins, and the taking home unto our ſelves the juſt deſert of condemnation, together with the crying downe the wrath of

Note.

Exod. 33. 3, 4.

God; and seeking the face of God by prayer doth well become all Christians who desire to enjoy the loving favour and the blessed countenance of God; what Father will shew his cheerefull countenance to an unhumbled son for former rebellions? and shall we think to see love and light in Gods face, till God see dejection in our countenances, and griefe in our hearts for our sins? O then let us be humbled. For

7.

Simile.

Christians are chiefly to be humbled for three things.

1. Our former disesteemes of former feelings of divine love, for that we did no more prize, and for that we did so carelesly undervalue, and but in an ordinary manner entertaine the pledges and testimonies of Gods speciall love unto us.

2. Our

2. Our former uncomfortableneſſe of ſpirit in and under the feelings of Gods love vouchſafed to us Chriſtians; wee did walk with too much ſadneſſe of ſpirit under many teſtimonies of Gods love unto us, (a thing very diſpleaſing unto God) and for which God doth greatly humble thoſe that are his; they who will not walke chearefully under the ſhining of Gods love upon them, ſhall have it withdrawne from them unto their deepe ſorrow.

3. Our unſtedfaſtneſſe and remiſſeneſſe in holy walking, we have beene too remiſſe in the Ordi-

nances and duties; we have beene cold and careleſſe in prayer, and hearing, &c. and this God cannot abide, for this wee muſt be humbled before the Lord, if ever wee expect the light of his countenance.

2. Secondly, prejudice not your ſelves unto a ſtate of divine love, make it not a thing impoſſible to you to recover and regaine Gods face and favour; Chriſtians in their loſſes are to grieve, and hope; it is not ſafe in the ſuſpenſions of divine favour to caſt off all hope of enjoying the ſame; it was a weakneſſe in *David* to thinke that God would be favourable no more; it is one of Satans tricks to preſent God at ſuch

times

times in full wrath to the ſoule, and to perſwade man that hee muſt bid farewell unto Gods love, the ſenſe being once loſt it ſhould never come againe into the ſoule. Now if men cloſe with Satan and will not be brought within the compaſſe of divine love, but are alwaies rearing up arguments of divine wrath within themſelves againſt themſelves, how ſhall they come to ſettle their ſoules in love? Can the waters run cleare if wee will alwaies be mudding them? if we pleade againſt divine love, how ſhall we apply it? ſhut faſt the windowes, and the light cannot come into the roome; deſpaire of ever enjoying Gods love, and you debarre your ſelves of all comfortable feeling of the ſame; helpe not

Simile.

not the divell against our selves and our comforts; but know that though God be not easily gained in his love once lost, yet the sense of Gods love after the sense of much wrath is attaineable, it being both tendred in the promise, and that which many faithfull Christians seeking have obtained; reade what is written, *for a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee: In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindnesse will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.* Esay 54. 7, 8.

3. Thirdly, set upon the recovering means of Gods favour unto your selves; Gods countenance which is now suspended may be renewed; the Sun is not alwaies clouded, and God will *Simile.*

not

not alwaies be offended; though God be not changeable in himselfe and love, yet sense of his love is with much variation to the same, Christians; sometimes they have much light and evidence, and can and doe apply it with great strength and comfort, enjoying as it were their heaven on earth; anon their apprehensions are clouded, and applications weakned, so that great love doth run with little sense, they are sonnes yet under sense of wrath, and yet they may rise up againe, and their God arise in the light of his countenance upon them; assuredly Christians might walke with more sense of Gods love if that they did practise these foure things.

Sense of love is graduall.

Foure things to be done for the regaining of Gods love in sense.

1. The giving off the waies

of sinne; a man is no way more an enemy unto his owne assurance of divine love, then in and by the continuing in the love and practise of any one knowne lust, which is the great displeasure of God; God (I grant) doth love where sinne is, but he doth neither love sinne nor will he shew himselfe loving to that man that is a lover of sin; if the heart gather iniquity to it selfe, how can the love of God dwell there? what is it that makes Gods children in the daies of distresse most doubtfull of Gods love, and most to question the same towards them? is it not the sins that they have committed? and can wee be in the waies of assurance when wee live in the waies of wickednesse? all adventuring upon sins doth beget divine hatred, make

Danger by sinning.

make faith to reele, and breeds nothing but doubts, and fears, and jealouſies; all which keeps off the feeling of divine love; O reſolve to give of all ſin, no way engage your hearts unto it, and you ſhall finde upon your turning from ſin, the turning of Gods face towards you, 2 *Chron.* 7.14. *Eſay* 55.7.

2. Be found in the waies of duty; inlarge the uprightneſſe of your ſoules, the humility of your minds, and ſtrive to all conſcionableneſſe, fervencie and ſtedfaſtneſſe of ſpirit in all required ſervices, and you ſhall finde divine favour bowing and bending towards you; a man is never more in the way of love, then when hee goes right on in the courſe of godlineſſe; when a mans life is wrought unto Gods will and ſpent in Gods worke,

worke; there cannot want particular discoveries of Gods love more or leſſe; if we live to God and with God, acting and mooving on in a courſe of holineſſe, though for the preſent all ſeeme to be clouded and darkned, love will breake out; Note with mee three things,

Three things about love and duty.

1. That a Chriſtian wanting aſſurance of divine love, dares not to decline duty and the ſervices of a ſpirituall life; though hee cannot as yet feele God in love, yet hee will waite upon God in duty.

2. That the ſenſe and aſſurance of Gods love in the heart, doth much enlarge the heart in the chearefull and powerfull performance of ho-

ly duries; no man is more spiritfull or painefull, then he which day by day feeleth Gods goodnesse; this is as the oyling to the wheeles, and the light unto working.

3. That while men goe on in a course of holy obedience, and moove on in duties out of love to God, God will not faile at length to give them some intimations of his love; *Thou meetest him that rejoyceth and worketh righteousnesse, those that remember thee in thy waies,* Esay 64.5.

3. Preserve your selves under the Ordinances, you are in the waies of love when you are in Gods presence, hearing Gods

Gods voice, and partaking of his Sacraments; these reveale the Fathers face unto you, here you shall have tenders of divine love unto you; and by these God will convey the sense of his love unto you; *I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved mee may be in them*; where we plainely see that God by the meanes of salvation doth perswade and settle the heart in the assurance of his love; let it then be your wisedomes to attend, setting your selves under the manifestation of love, and God in time will speake peace to your hearts, and let you to know the love that hee hath towards you, waite I say upon God in his Ordinances, and surely the good houre will come

Joh. 17. 26.

come that the heare and comfort of Gods love shall be apprehended by you? *I will heare what the Lord will speake, for hee will speake peace unto his people and to his Saints*, Psal. 85. 8.

4. Cleare the warrants and grounds of faith; this is most true, that faith lives in love, and in the promises of love, and there can be no sound perswasion of Gods love in the soule without faith; as the Gospell sheweth love, and God bestoweth love, so faith receiveth and applieth love; *wee have knowne and beleeved the love that God hath to us*, now faith doth never worke so clearely and apprehensively in divine love, as when its warrants and grounds (which are the promises of God) are very cleare unto

a 1 Joh. 4. 16.

unto the ſoule; there are two things which keepe men off from the comfortable apprehenſion of divine favour.

Two things keeping men off the apprehenſion of divine love 1. Miſplacing of warrants.

1. One is the miſplacing of warrants, when men are miſtaken in the matter of Gods love, and will judge themſelves to be under divine love upon generall teſtimonies, and by forraigne pawnes, even ſuch as hypocrites or caſt-awaies may have, forgetting that ſaying of *Salomon*, *No man knoweth love or hatred by all that is before them*, Eccleſ. 9. 2. Suppoſe a man to have concurrence of naturall parts, common graces, morrall moderation, formality of religion, and plenty of all outward

things

things, now if he hereupon fancie a love of God unto him (as too too many doe) the man mistakes himselfe and cannot be setled in Gods love to him.

2. Another is the darkening and mudding of warrants; when faith is kept from the cleare apprehension of promises, and cannot see all its priviledges, when men will cast mists of mis-interpretation and jealousie upon the promises, questioning their goodnesse or truth, either in themselves or to themselves; now love cannot be so felt and apprehended as it might be; let it be your work therfore to

2. Darkening of warrants.

to reade over the promises of God to faith, and make them as plaine and cleare to faith as you can, consider well how many grants of favour are made over to faith, and enlarge faith in these promises, and then shall you finde and feele much love in your soules.

4. Wisely support your soules and uphold your selves by these ensuing considerations:

8. Things for the setling the soule in the absence of divine love.

1. That it is no new or strange thing for Gods deerest children in their sense to be forsaken of divine love, and to have apprehensions of divine wrath towards them; the light of Gods love was withdrawne for a time from Christ the Sonne

Sonne of Gods onely love, and from his Church, *Pſal.* 44. *Lam.* 3.

2. That God doth never withdraw the ſenſe of his love from any of his children but for ſome ſpeciall cauſes and profitable ends; ſuch as are,

1. The triall of their diſpoſition and temper towards himſelfe; it is an excellent ſpirit that can love God frowning, and depend upon God abſenting and withdrawing himſelfe; *I will wait upon the Lord that hides his face from the houſe of Iacob, and and I will looke for him,* *Eſay* 8. 17.

2. The ranſacking of their ſoules, now they goe to ſeeke and finde out all the idols of indigna-

Cauſes of Gods ſuſpending his love from his.

tion

tion that are remaining within them; a little of Gods anger felt and apprehended doth much afflict the heart with sorrow for sinne, and eate out the love of sinne within, a man doth never apprehend and feele his sinnes with more griefe and hatred then in the times of Gods absence, as 1 Sam. 24. 12.

3. The putting us into the most excellent life of faith; our disposition is to live too much by sense, and wee would alwaies enjoy God by sight; but for as much as sight is reserved for another world, and there wee shall have the full and

and constant fruition of Gods love by vision, God will and doth in this life exercise us in the life of faith, making us in the *non*-feeling of love to believe love unto us.

4. The searching out of their grounds and evidences, to see if that there be any thing of God left within them, by which they may gaine any assurance that God doth love them.

5. The preparing of them for greater apprehension of his love and favour in time to come; God many times after a little absence doth shew himselfe more glorious and comfortable in his love

to

to the ſoule then ever he did in times paſt; in the little forſakings of God the ſoule is more ſet after God, and more enlarged to receive from God the teſtimonies of his love then ever it was formerly.

Now then if God will doe his children good in and by the withdrawments of his countenance from them, why ſhould they be ſo dejected as they are under them?

3. That though the love of God be much unto his in every condition, yet ſuch as are Gods ſhall never be able to know and feele all the love of God to them, or ſo much of Gods love as their deſires lead them unto: in this life we have our taſtes, and we ſhall never have our fill

untill

untill we come to heaven, *Epheſ.* 3.19.

4. That the condition of love is one thing, and the feeling of love another thing, alwaies love is not felt, Gods love may be towards us when his looke is not, a tender Father doth many times fold up his love in angry words and harſh actions, and a loving God to a ſinfull Chriſtian may exerciſe his love inſenſibly, ſo as a man may be in favour when he feeles no favour, he may be that in faith which hee is not in ſenſe.

5. That ſuch who have not preſent ſenſe of love, may yet have a preſent ground for Gods love unto them; Now the ſure ground of Gods love unto us is the promiſe of love; *Thou Lord wilt bleſſe the righteous,*

The promiſe is the ground of love. Pſal. 5 12.

our, with favour wilt thou compasse him, saith *David*; and truth it is that our happinesse stands in this assurance, that divine love is in the promise; here is our stock, and if wee had no more love then what wee could hold in sense, all love would soone be gone; this therefore must be the wisedome of Christians not to judge of their interest unto Gods love by the present actuall feelings of it within their soules, but by the gratious promise of love made over unto them on Gods part; reason thus; what though I cannot feele and find Gods favour to be towards mee? yet why should I be dejected? hath not God given out a word of truth for love and favour unto mee?

Note.

6. That such Christians who

who have not the preſent ſenſe of Gods love, may have future ſenſe of Gods love; Gods love is never totally nor finally withdrawne from his children; the ſuſpenſions of Gods favour are temporary, and God doth many times reſerve great aſſurance unto after times: *David* in confidence of this ſaith, *The Lord will command his loving kindneſſe in the day time, and in the night his ſong ſhall be with mee, and my prayer unto the God of my life,* *Pſal.* 42. 8. Thus ſaith the Church, *He will bring mee forth to the light, and I ſhall behold his righteouſneſſe,* *Micah* 7.9. This is the reaſoning of faith; God hath loving kindneſſe and hee can ſhew it, and will ſhew it, I have found him a very loving God unto my ſoule in times paſt, and why

Simile. should I doubt of future expectations; after a night of darkeneſſe commeth a day of light, and after a ſtorme commeth a calme; the cloud may be remooved and I may enjoy my God as fully and as freely as ever heretofore.

7. 7. That ſenſe of Gods love is graduall; it is neither in all Chriſtians in the ſame meaſure and degree, nor at all times the ſame in the ſame Chriſtians; truth it is that as it is one and the ſame Sun that ſhineth over the whole world, ſo it is one and the ſame love of God for kind that is manifeſted to all Chriſtians, yet ſome have a more large and greater meaſure, and a larger and greater ſenſe of that love then others, according to the will and wiſedome of God; I ſay it paſſeth

Simile.

Love one for kinde different in degree.

to

to the ſenſe with much variation, now the leaſt aſſurance of divine love towards us ſhould be a great upholdment of our ſpirits under the want of much ſenſe and feeling of Gods love within us.

Ob. Yea, could I find any pledges of Gods love to mee, then I could be comforted and ſetled, but I feare that God did never love mee?

Sol. Beloved, you ſee how ſcruple begets ſcruple, as wave doth wave; and to give a ſhott anſwer unto this caſe, there are theſe ſignes of a mans former enjoyment of Gods love.

4 Signes of the former feelings of Gods love

1. Continued temptations about the love of God unto a mans ſelfe in particular; and that not onely in the times of affliction and hower of death, but at ſuch times when a Chri-

ſtian ſets himſelfe to try his owne ſtanding in grace, and to ſettle himſelfe in the aſſurance of Gods love unto him; I ſay the more intereſt any man hath unto Gods love, the more ſpite ſhall he have from Satan, and the more feeling any man hath of divine love, the more ſhall ſuch a man be followed with ſtrong ſuggeſtions and horrible temptations drawne from divine wrath; ſhall wee imagine that if Satan hearing the proclamation from heaven of Gods love to Chriſt, *Mat.* 3.17. would norwithſtanding ſeaze upon him, and tempt him to doubt of his Sonſhip and Fathers care and love, that now any member of Chriſt in and under the aſſurance of Gods love ſhall be free from his malicious moleſtations and hideous

ous temptations? the divell hates where God loves; and 'tis strange to behold how Gods children doe many times make those things to be arguments of discouragements which are or need to be none at all; O say they Satan doth molest and tempt me daily, and tells me of divine wrath that is towards mee: well, suppose he say so, wilt thou beleeve him? was *hee not a lyer and a murtherer from the beginning?* is not his name *the accuser of the Brethren before God day and night? Revel.* 12. 10. are not all the testimonies of Satan directly or obliquely against the truth of God and comfort of Christians? tell me O Christian, what is it hurtfull or prejudiciall to Satan if God doe hate a man? him whom God indeed doth hate is

5. *Note.*

Iob 8.44

6.

the proper subject of Satan, and no wise Prince will make warre on his own subjects: conclude that wert thou not in Gods favour, Satan would let thee alone and not trouble thee in the setling, or under thy not feeling of his love unto thee.

2. Miserableneſſe of soule under the want of the apprehension of divine love; wee now can grieve and grow sad because wee faile of our once enjoyed feelings; all cloudings and ecclipses in the assurance of divine love are terrible to Christians; the hiding of the Sun is discomfortable, and the withdrawments of divine love is a cause of just trouble; men that never felt divine love, make nothing of its absence; but to have it called back from one that hath found and felt it, it

maketh

maketh a sad and a darke day; it is impossible for the soule of man to be humblingly and sorrowfully sensible of the want of Gods love, but there hath beene some former feelings of divine love within, *Psal.*30.5.

3. Risings of the desires after the sense and degrees of divine love; if a man hath tasted of Gods love unto him hee shall finde stirrings and longings in his soule after further and greater sense; now saith such a "one, O that God would shine "forth in much love unto my "soule; O that I could see his "face as the face of a reconci-"led God unto mee; time was "when I enjoyed his love and it "was better then wine; O that "I could now enjoy it once "more, then should my life be

"full of comfort and content "unto mee; can true desires rise up after divine love, if it were never formerly apprehended and felt by the soule? assuredly it is, because there are some sparkles of Gods love in the soule that men doe eagerly and sincerely desire the same; *Let him kisse mee with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better then wine:* the Church had found the love of Christ to be better then wine, and hereupon shee doth desire him to kisse her.

Cant. 1. 2.

4. Endeavours after the sense of Gods love; they that have once tasted of Gods love in the enjoyment of it, are ready to maintaine and hold it up within them, yea and to keepe it with the losse of all outward sensible comforts; accounting

Note.

that

that one day ſpent (though with much conflict of corruption and temptation) in the true taſte and ſenſe of Gods love in Chriſt is farre beyond all the contentments which the world can affoord; and if at any time they are at a loſſe and doe miſſe of their former feelings they give not off their hope and diligence, but doe ſet themſelves into the waies of aſſurance, & will leave no ſtone unrolled to get their former ſenſe of love if it may be: whence doth this ariſe? is it not from ſome former touch of the ſoule by the love of God? when *Elijahs* mantle was once caſt upon *Eliſha*, hee could not but follow him; and certaine when Gods love hath beene ſeene and felt, a man ſhall follow on to know more and

more the waies of love.

8. 8. When men for the present can find no sense of Gods love within them, they must support themselves upon the foundation, which is this:

The foundation stands in 2 things.

1. That all upright and beleeving persons have a loving God, who is the fullnesse and fountaine of love unto them, how ever their feelings and apprehensions are of it; say, *Yet God is good to Israel, and beares a loving heart to the upright*; beloved know, that changes in us doe not conclude any change in God, he is a constant and unchangeable God in his love to his, *whom he once loveth he loveth unto the end.*

Psal. 77. 1.

Joh. 13. 2.

2. That Christians are saved because God loveth them, not because they doe perceive and feele the love that God hath toward

toward them; our feeling makes to comfort, but the being of love unto happineſſe.

CASE. II.

Of doubtings ariſing and continuing in the ſoule.

THere are two ſorts of men that are of contrary opinions about the matters of doubtings; the one who concludes an unwarranted happineſſe unto themſelves, becauſe they finde within themſelves a freedome from all doubts; ſuch bleſſe God that they never doubted in all their lives; but have gone on alwaies in a ſetled and peaceable way, never ſcrupling or queſtioning their own preſent ſtanding

Two ſorts of men.
1. Men of no doubtings.

or

or future happineſſe; a very ſtrange temper from religion; for though doubtings be not the eſſence of a Chriſtian, yet he cannot be a ſound and ſetled Chriſtian that never doubted; it cannot be but that ſuch who in the ſtate of nature did not feare to ſinne, will when they are brought into the ſtate of grace doubt of themſelves by reaſon of ſinne; would you not wonder at that man who ſhould *Simile.* paſſe over many unknowne countreys, and creſſe many parting paths and waies, and yet ſhould tell you that in all his travells he ſhould never be at a ſtand, or queſtion which was the way that he ſhould take? and it is to me as ſtrange a Chriſtian that can paſſe over ſo many croſſe and unknowne paths unto nature, as are to be gon over and

and yet never to be weather-beaten, or wind-ſhaken, or to be ſo ſimple as to doubt; for certaine this is nothing but preſumption and ſelfe-deceiving; and I would wiſh no man to bleſſe himſelfe in this eſtate.

2. Men of doubtings

An other who doubts of his eſtate becauſe of doubtings; it is a maine part of Satans policie to ſtagger Gods children, and to cauſe the riſing up of ſuſpitions and doubtings whether that they are Chriſtians, and in the ſtate of grace yea or no, and then by reaſon of the many doubtings that are found within them, exceedingly to trouble "them: O ſay they, we finde "within our ſelves the ſuſpenſi- "on of our mindes in the deter- "mination thereof; our ſoules "doe hang betweene two ob- "jects, and unto either of them "they

The nature of doubting.

"they cannot fixedly incline;
"we finde that there are at one
"time two distinct and opposite
"waies, and objects and ends
"proposed and presented unto
"our mindes for choice, as to
"beleeve and not to beleeve, to
"be saved and not to be saved,
"to do this and not to do this,
"to have heaven and not to have
"heaven: and now it becomes
"questionable unto us, which of
"these two is eligible, or which
"of these two shall befall us; the
"minde reflects upon both, and
"looks upon both, yet one alone
"must be ours in the issue; our
"mindes do debate exceeding-
"ly and beate themselves about
"them, whether this or that; this
"way or that way we shall go
"we know not; there are found
"within us at the same time the
"assentings & dissentings of our
"minds;

"minds; perſwaſions and diſſwa-
"ſions take hold of us, we are
"like unto the waves of the ſea,
"that thruſt forth to the ſhore
"and yet drawing back againe,
"or like unto men in ungrounded *Simile.*
"places, who no ſooner pluck
"up one leg but the other ſinkes
"in deeper; many reaſons on
"either ſide are apprehended
"and no faſtning can be found;
"if we looke

"1. Upon things to be be- Doubt-
"leeved and done, there ings ſeene
"are within us doubtings in two
"of the truth and good- things.
"nes of the one, or of the
"lawfullneſſe & unlaw-
"fullneſſe of the perfor-
"mance of the other; we
"ſtill halt betweene two
"opinions: if we looke
"2. Upon our owne parti-
"cular courſe and condi-
"tion;

"tion; whether that we
"are Christians indeed,
"and be such whose per-
"sons are accepted of
"God, whose waies do
"please God, who have
"any part in the Cove-
"nant, or just title to the
"best things, and that
"when we die we shal go
"to heaven; here likewise
"our hearts do mis-give
"us & we daily question
"our own estates; And
"could this be our condition if
"that we were in a good estate?
This I confesse is the trouble of
Gods dearest children, whose
mindes within them are diver-
sly carried, and cannot come to
a rest, whose mindes do hang in
suspence and cannot determine;
this condition causeth unto
them, 1. Multiplication of dis-
putes,

Doubtings in the godly cause foure things.

putes, ſuch perſons have contrariety of reaſonings within themſelves, reaſon can never be equally ballanced, but remaineth as a paire of ſcales turning this way and that way, ſuch can ſay as much why they ſhould not doe ſuch and ſuch duties, as why they ſhould doe them; and they conceive as many and as ſtrong reaſons why that they ſhould be damned as why they ſhould be ſaved; 2. Interruption of the practicall act of the underſtanding, that it cannot give ſentence either way for a man or againſt a man: ſo that men under doubts remaine under certaine trouble and reſtleſneſſe, but uncertaine quiet and reliefe, and know no more what to reſolve on then he who hath referred himſelfe and his cauſe unto the umperage of him, who will

will not as yet declare himselfe. 3. Uproare in affections; they will be very tumultuous; passions by doubtings are set on a hurley burley and rage exceedingly, now men fret and feare and faint, and even vexe themselves unto death. 4. Alterations and changes, men under doubts are constant in inconstancie, and doe never remaine, setled unto themselves; they cannot be long of one mind; but as the weather-cock doth turne with every turning of the wind from point to point, so such men to day shall and will be of a good mind for God and Heaven; but to morrow shifting, and of a new and another mind, thus doe they every day vary from themselves: and this being the condition of a doubtfull Christian, I cannot wonder why his

Simile.

doubts

doubts ſhould ſo perplexe him. Conſider with mee one thing more; what it is that cauſeth doubtings in the ſoule? and if we prove the ſprings or cauſes to be evill and terrible, no marvaile if that they are ſo troubleſome unto Chriſtians: I open it thus unto you,

Doubtings within Chriſtians ſpring,

Five cauſes of doubtings in Chriſtians.

1. From originall corruption, that ſinning ſinne, and mother of all ſinne in men, which hath in it the ſeed of all ſinne, and therefore doubtings; nature it ſelfe can nothing but doubt, fleſh in the Elect is wavering and weake, even when grace would beleeve and ſettle, *innumerable evills have compaſſed mee about, mine iniquities have taken hold of mee ſo that I am not able to looke up, they are more then the*

the haires of my head, therefore my heart faileth mee, saith *David, Psal.* 40. 12. in which place you may see plainely what it was that made *Davids* heart to faile him, it was his sinnes, these were the clog unto his spirit, and these were they that did stagger and doubt him.

2. 2. From the darkenesse and ignorance that is within their mindes, withholding not so much the light of nature as the light of the Scripture in generall, and of the promise in particular, without which they are never able to judge aright of things and condition; what determination can there be whilst a man is in darkenesse? he that cannot see what hee is, or where he is, may do things at a Pro. 4. 18 venture onely, but in all things he

hee is uncertaine and doubtfull.

3 From the hurryings and winnowings of Satan, who followeth Gods children with many and various temptations, in times of tempeſt it is no new thing to ſee a ſhip faſtly anchored toſſed too and fro; and when Satan is maliciouſly haunting and vexing a Chriſtian, no marvaile if doubts and irreſolvedneſſe do appeare: 3. *Simile.*

4. From the greatneſſe of dangers into which they are caſt; if *Peter* be ready to ſinke in the ſea he will doubt; *O thou of little faith wherefore didſt thou doubt?* ſaith Chriſt; wee ſee how his feares did ſinke him below the waters, and ſurely as a Chriſtians troubles (inward or outward) doe ariſe, ſo doe his doubtings ariſe alſo; the ſhip Mat. 14. 31.

doth

Simile. doth not more naturally arise with the flowing in of the waters, then doubts in the soule with the comming in of troubles.

5. 5. From Gods forsaking and deserting of his; when God goeth away with his light, and leaveth his in darknesse, so as they cannot see or apprehend him to be their GOD, now they begin to question themselves and their estates exceedingly.

Ten relievemẽts against doubtings in the mind.

But you will say unto mee, what shall a Christian doe for his setling in this case? I shall yeeld unto you these helps following.

1. First, know that the estate of no Christian is so absolutely perfect on earth, that at all times and in all things it should yeeld him an absolute certaintie or free-

freedome from al doubts, whilst there is a divell to tempt, and Christians are weake in judgement and experience, lying in the cradle of godlinesse, they may be tossed too and fro and fall to questioning of their estate; there is no tree so surely rooted but in blasting times it may be shaken; *Peter* doubts, and the Disciples doubt, and the Christians doubt, though they did not despaire; *Mat.* 14. 31. 28. 17. 2 *Cor* 4. 8. a mans estate may be good, and his title currant to God, and Christ, and Heaven, and yet hee may be irresolved, and troubled with many doubtings and that for a long time together. *Simile.*

Secondly, that doubtings within the soules of Christians doe not argue a totall want of faith, but an imperfection and small 2.

ſmall portion of faith; it is not the abſence of faith, but the littleneſſe of faith in them which is the ground of their doubtings; O thou of little faith, wherefore didſt thou doubt? where wee ſee that Chriſt doth impute *Peters* doubting to the littleneſſe of his beleeving; I ſay that when faith is little in compariſon, and little in operation, this is the ground of doubting, for here wants proportionable ſtrength unto ſetling, & here men have too open an eye upon their wants and diſcouragements, but a very dimme eye to ſee their helpes and incouragements; in a word, here is a want of ſtrength to repaire to the meanes of eſtabliſhment, and a marvailous unskillfullneſſe to argue from the promiſes, and to maintaine its owne grounds;

Littlenes of faith a ground of doubting and why?

grounds; thus it is, as the leſſe the fire is the more is the ſmoke; ſo the more imperfect the faith is, the more is and will be the doubtings of Chriſtians, a little heate and great miſts, and a little faith and great doubtings may goe together. *Simile.*

Thirdly, that faith and doubtings are not oppoſed as life and death, where the preſence of the one determinately concludes the abſence of the other; but looke as cold and heate in remiſſe degrees may be in one and the ſame ſubject, though the nature of cold be not the nature of heate; ſo though faith be not doubting, nor doubting faith, yet both may and doe meete in the ſame perſon; actuall doubtings may be where is habituall faith, they are not 3. *Simile.* One and the ſame perſon may beleeve and doubt and how?

K an-

answering parts one unto another, for they remaine in contrariety and opposition, nor things that are simultaneous in their acts and operations; doubtings can no more consist at the same time with the acts of faith, then its possible that a man should lay his hand on the rock and not lay his hand on the rock at the same time, or that a mans eye should see and not see the colour at the same time; the soule cannot at the same time set out from the same faculty opposite acts: and it cannot be that while the soule doth beleeve it should doubt.

4. A caution

Fourthly, that Gods children from the presence of weaknesses & doubtings must not conclude a nullity of grace and faith within themselves, God forbid that we should thinke our field had no

no corne becauſe of many weeds in it, or the heape had no wheate becauſe of much chaffe, or the ſoule no grace becauſe of doubtings. *Simile.*

Fiftly, that the leaſt degree of faith within the ſoule of a man, though accompanied with never ſo many doubtings, doth denominate Chriſtians beleevers with God, *Peters* doubting did not put him out of the ranke of beleevers; Chriſt doth not ſay to him, O thou of doubting, thy faith is little; but hee gives him this title, *O thou of little faith*; God judgeth of his according to their better part, and if he finde a little grace among many corruptions, hee calls us according unto the grace. 5. Mat. 14. 31.

Sixthly, there muſt be care taken to diſtinguiſh doubtings 6.

answering parts one unto another, for they remaine in contrariety and oppoſition, nor things that are ſimultaneous in their acts and operations; doubtings can no more conſiſt at the ſame time with the acts of faith, then its poſſible that a man ſhould lay his hand on the rock and not lay his hand on the rock at the ſame time, or that a mans eye ſhould ſee and not ſee the colour at the ſame time; the ſoule cannot at the ſame time ſet out from the ſame faculty oppoſite acts: and it cannot be that while the ſoule doth beleeve it ſhould doubt.

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Sixthly, there muſt be care taken to diſtinguiſh doubtings 6.

in Chriſtians from doubtings that are found in unregenerate men; moſt true it is, that the ſame diſeaſe of doubting is incident unto good and bad, it is corruption in both, it being a ſinne for any to doubt; yet it is as true, that doubting ſtands differingly in the godly from the wicked, in theſe reſpects:

1. In the godly there is doubting againſt a temper and frame directly oppoſite unto doubtings; doubtings in them doe hold an oppoſition againſt faith and perſwaſion wrought in the ſoule; faith in nature and act is oppoſite to doubting in nature and act; they have two ſprings or cauſes in the ſoule of man; it is impoſſible that the doubtings of the godly ſhould ſpring from their ſpirituall frame

Doubting a nature and an infirmity.

frame and temper; grace doth not begin or cheriſh doubtings in any, it forbids to doubt and commands to beleeve; it grieves at doubting and thirſts after ſetling, ſo that they ſtand as infirmities in the godly, not as a nature; in unregenerate men doubtings are a nature and of their entire conſtitution; doubtings are begotten and bred up in them by a nature that is wholy ſinnefull and doubtfull.

2. In the godly doubtings are ſubdued in their power, by reaſon of converſion and Sanctification, wherein this as well as all other ſinnes receiveth it deaths wounds; the life and trouble of doubts onely remaine in the godly, interrupting them in the great worke of beleeving, for were not faith

Doubting in combate and in conqueſt.

assaulted by the stirrings of doubtings within, it would doe its part most gloriously, but now as a man that hath a maimed leg cannot moove as hee desires, no more can Christians beleeve as they would, by reason of doubtings which doe crosse them; but this is all that doubtings can doe in the godly, they can molest, but never command; their powers are crushed, and faith riseth up victoriously over all at the last; now in wicked men doubtings raigne and have soveraigne authority.

Doubtings 1. Partiall 2. Entire

3. In the godly doubtings are partiall; it is of the subject, not of the object; in action, not affection; of evidence, not adherance; of the circumstantialls, not substantialls; it is thus with Christians, that though in many passages

paſſages they cannot be certainely perſwaded that they are good and right, yet in many other things they are ſetled and reſolved; whereas doubtings in wicked men are totall and entire, 'tis all doubting and that in all things.

4. In the godly doubtings turne unto their profit, God for very good ends doth ſuffer doubtings in his, as 1. To free them from many ſins of pride, preſumption, negligence and the like: 2. To force them to their divine helps, that now they may the more enquire and ſeeke reſolution and ſetling from Heaven. 3. To make them more firme and certaine at the laſt; a tree in ſhaking gets fixedneſſe, a ſcholler by enquiry gets ſatisfaction, and a Chriſtian by his doubtings com-

Ends of doubtings in the godly foure.

Simile.

Nil tam certum quàm quod ex dubio certum.

meth to be more resolved; all our doubtings end in resolution: God will give unto his at the last full satisfaction of soule and conscience.

5. In the Elect all doubtings are curable and recoverable, they are possible of cure, and shall actually be cured in Gods time by Gods meanes; the Lord doth mercifully heale his of all the toſſings and turnings of their minds, that at length they come to rest upon the mountaine of his truth & goodnesse unto them in Christ; there is an excellent temper toward healing wrought in Gods children; they have a bent unto determination, and will not give up their case as desperate, what though they cannot quit themselves of all uncertainties, and attaine unto positive fixing, yet

Note.

yet they will with *Noahs* Dove hover over the Arke, which is Chriſt and the Promiſes, the onely and able grounds of ſtedfaſtneſſe and ſetling unto Chriſtians.

The doubtings of wicked men are poſſible of curing, if wee conſider what God by his power can doe; but yet they remaine uncured by the juſtice of God lying upon them, and do go on increaſing doubtings unto their owne damnation; ſo that in the one, doubtings are miſerable, but in the other damnable.

Seventhly, beware of maintaining and cheriſhing doubtings within your owne ſoules: it is for Chriſtians to labour after the cure of this diſeaſe of doubting, and to cloſe up this ſpirituall diſtemper within their 7.

Motives to cure doubtings are three.

ſoules, conſidering, 1. That doubting is an ill quality in the ſoule, that breeds unto much diſcomfort, depriving of all true ſtaiedneſſe and contentment; 2. It is that which is very hinderſome to a progreſſe in Chriſtianity, keeping Chriſtians at a ſtay and ſtanding, and 3. There is nothing which is more injurious to God in his Attributes, who muſt not be queſtioned in his promiſed Power, Truth, Love and Goodneſſe; and yet we find this to be a common failing in doubting Chriſtians, to cheriſh and nouriſh doubtings within themſelves, yea, and many times to ſtudy and follow the way of doubting; a great and cruell evill moſt gratefull unto Satan, and diſpleaſing to God: my counſell therefore is unto you

Meanes againſt cheriſhing doubts.

1. To

1. To make and maintaine no argument within you againſt the full and gratious promiſes of God; delight not in that childiſh and unreaſonable kinde of diſputation which may hurry the ſoule with feares and doubtings, helping doubts againſt faith; if men will thruſt away the promiſes from themſelves, and ſay, that though there be an abſolute truth and goodneſſe in them, yet their truth and goodneſſe doth not belong unto them, how can the ſoule poſſibly ſettle and be quiet; can the anchor fixe if it want ground, or the bird reſt whilſt its in the aire? no more

Simile.

more can a Christian resolve and settle if it pleade against the promises.

2. Beleeve no testimonie of Satan concerning your conditions; I know Satan will take upon him to judge of Christians sinnes and services, and temper and state, and as he hath an art to colour over the true condition of sinnefull bondage, so hee hath a deluſion in hiding from the eyes of Christians the true powers of gratious sincerity and safe standing; now if wee looke upon things in the divells glasse, beleeving that all things are in us and with us as hee doth tell us, how

how ſhall wee be toſſed too and fro, and what can abide us but daily doubtings? for Satan will alwaies be deciding and determining againſt a Chriſtians comfort and happineſſe, hee being their utter enemie; it doth well become us to wave the erroneous judgement of Satan,

The teſtimony of Satan put by two waies.

1. By making our appeales unto God the Juſt and Supreame Judge, to whom immediately and onely the deciſive power doth appertaine, I ſay none but God can decide the triall of a mans eternall eſtate.

2. By

2. By resting in the testimonie of Gods Word; wee must learne the skill of beating of Satan by the Word, setting up the judgement of the Word against the judgement of Satan; and if wee can finde from the Word a good estate, let Satan goe and whistle, we need in nothing be troubled by him.

3. Be not apt to give way unto needlesse and causeless feares; this is a great fault in Christians, and very injurious unto setling; you shall seldome finde but that an overfearing nature is a

a doubting nature, and if we will give way unto the creating and multiplying of our feares, wee ſhall feed and nouriſh ſcruples and doubtings exceedingly; conſider it in experience, if that a childe be hurt, or any unexpected newes brought unto us of the ſickneſſe, or calamity of a neare and deare friend, the heart is preſently grieving and fearing, and when feares prevaile and command within, then the minde is full of queſtionings, ſure the wound is mortall, and my friend is dead, or in farre worſe condition then is reported unto mee, and alas what will be

be the iſſue? the party is extreamely cruciated in his minde, and juſt ſo is it in the caſe in hand, if that men will ſtill feare their eſtate, how can they but ſtill continue under doubtings, and be as it were at their wits end, not knowing what to doe or what ſhall become of themſelves.

4. Doe not diſregard motions and motives unto ſetledneſſe; there are many who come to Gods Word and Miniſters with their doubtings, and with many teares and bitter complaints they vent themſelves of them, now when the Miniſter hath

hath judicially ſhewed unto them not onely the cauſes, but the cures of thoſe their doubtings, and hath given unto them curing comfort and counſell, they ſet up their reaſons againſt all that is ſaid, and conceive the man to be miſtaken in them; or elſe they forget the conſolation, not applying themſelves to the way preſcribed; and ſurely long may ſuch continue under a doubting condition who reject all directions given unto them.

Eighthly, affect not a life of ſenſe; this will expoſe us to infinite doubtings, it is open unto all windes and hath no con- 8.

constant bottome to settle upon; observe the uncertainty of this life of sense in *Thomas*; the man would not beleeve that Christ was risen, *except he should see in his hands the print of the nailes, and thrust his hand into his side*, *Ioh.*20.21. Say now that Christ had for ever withdrawne his bodily presence from *Thomas*, where had beene all those sweet comforts which he might have enjoyed in and by the resurrection of Christ? certainely hee had lost them for ever, if sense must be his judge and give the sentence; Christ therefore doth shew him his weaknesse and failing, in saying to him, *Thomas, Blessed are they that have not seene and yet have beleeved*, *verse* 29. you that will have all by sight and feeling, or else you

you will never be quiet, I tell you

1. That ſenſe is not a fit judge of a Chriſtians ſpirituall condition; it cannot at all times ſee into our eſtates, much leſſe report our eſtate unto us, the ſpirituall condition may be without all feeling; eyes may faile, and fleſh faile, and God frowne, and faith onely expreſſe ſuch acts as are pure and hidden, grounding it ſelfe upon the naked promiſe, and how can ſenſe report and give ſentence. Pſal 73. 28.

2. That ſenſe is yea and nay, it maketh our condition to be good and bad, loſt and found, and that many times in one day, nay in one hower, and all becauſe it looketh on the outſide of things, judging according to outward appearance; I yeeld that it is uncomfortable for a man

man to walke without his feeling, but it is as uncertaine to walke altogether by feeling.

3. That the ſpirituall courſe of Chriſtians doth many times goe againſt all the ſenſe of Chriſtians; ſenſe and the promiſe are many times at a contradiction; the promiſe goeth on when ſenſe cannot perceive it, but behold the contrary; and how can ſenſe meeting with contrarieties reſolve?

4. That ſenſe goes mans way, but faith goes Gods way; ſenſe moves upon what appeares, and takes Gods deed, whereas faith relyeth upon Gods Word, and pitcheth upon things inviſible; *I will waite upon the Lord that hides his face from the houſe of Iacob, and I will looke for him, Eſa.* 8.17.

8.17. to this purpoſe reade *Eſa.* 50.10. *Hab.*3.17,18.

Ninthly, maintaine and ſet up faith; beleeving is the ground of ſetling, *after yee beleeved you were ſealed*, ſaith *Paul*, *Epheſ* 1.13. a man cannot have the fruit before hee hath the tree, nor ſafety before hee hath laid himſelfe on the rock, nor aſſurance before he beleeveth; looke as the ſoule breeds ſeeing in the eyes, and hearing in the eares; ſo true faith doth breed in the ſoule true ſetledneſſe and aſſurance: if Chriſtians could riſe up to the granting way of faith, their doubts would more and more vaniſh; faith is

9. *Simile.*

1. The firſt ground of all a Chriſtians aſſurances and experiences, if any man hath either in his ſoule

soule he obtained them by faith.

2. The prime instrument bringing home the comfort of all divine good unto the soule, the joy of Heaven, merit of Christ, and favour of God cannot actually comfort and quiet mans heart until that faith hath done its part.

Faith at liberty and in authority doth compose a Christians doubtings, keeping him from sinking under them two waies;

1. By yeelding a ground for setlednesse; all the while the soule can finde and feele no bottome, it cannot but doubt and stagger; can the ship but rowle up and downe when the *Simile.* Marriner cannot findea place to fixe

fixe his anchor? but when a man can finde in and by beleeving the truth and goodneſſe of a promiſe to reſt upon, and can ſay as *David*, *Remember the word unto thy ſervant upon which thou haſt cauſed mee to hope*, now is hee reſolved and become quiet; I beleeved and therefore I ſpake, and what reaſon is there that a man ſhould doubt his ſafety when hee is once fully ſet upon the rocke? Pſal. 119. 49.

2. By overmatching all the cauſes and grounds of doubtings imagined by Chriſtians; Chriſtians doubt many times when as they have little reaſon to doubt; and ſometimes they thinke their reaſons for their doubtings are unanſwerable; but faith prevailing will put the lie and folly upon al that can

can be ſaid for doubting, it will ſhame and ſilence the fooliſh reaſonings of the hearts of Gods children; you may ſee this in *David*; when his thougths ranne wild upon the proſperities of wicked men, and the adverſities of Gods children, how did his doubts come in upon him, even to his ſinking, he ſaith, *Verily I have cleanſed my heart in vaine, and waſhed my hands in innocency, for all the day long I have beene plagued:* but how doth he recover himſelfe? Surely it was by the exerciſe and liberty of his faith, he went into the houſe of God, and there his faith found matter and ground to worke upon, and hee became better ſetled in his ſoule, *Pſal.* 73.13,14,15,16,17. and truth it is, that every thing appeares in

in all cauſes of feare, when faith is not the maſter and cannot have full power to be agent and factor for a Chriſtian; *Beleeve in the Lord your God and you ſhall bee eſtabliſhed*, 2 *Chron.* 20. 20.

Tenthly, ſubdue and keepe downe ſinne in the love and power thereof; *If iniquity be in thine hand, put it farre away, and let not wickedneſſe dwell in thy tabernacles; for then ſhalt thou lift up thy face without ſpot, yea thou ſhalt be ſtedfaſt, and ſhalt not feare, Iob* 11. 14, 15. where we plainely ſee, that the more ſinne doth die in its love and power within the ſoule, the more will doubtings die too; kill ſinne, and faith lives, and doubts vaniſh; The Apoſtle would that men ſhould *draw neere* 10.

Heb. 10. 22.

with a true heart in assurance of faith, (i. e.) to cast away doubtings in their approaches to God, and not to come indifferently, may be I shall be accepted, may be I shall not, but as verily perswaded of Gods acceptation; happily some Christian might say to him, how might a man doe this? (he answereth) *having the heart sprinkled from an evill conscience, q. d.* faith cannot well perswade, nor the heart settle till you get quit of sinne, if your consciences doe charge and condemne you of evill, you will be doubtfull; truth it is, that doubtings are cured by Mortification, the heart must be circumcised of its unbeleeving and hardnesse and ungodlinesse ere ever wee shall get quit of doubtings: if wee

resolve

reſolve to be evill, wee muſt reſolve to be doubtfull, were it not for ſinnefullneſſe faith would be quicker and ſtronger, and wee more ſetled and ſtaied in our mindes: a heavie rhume falling into the eyes doth hinder a man from looking up; and ſinne entertained in the ſoule reares up contrary reaſonings and denials to faith, making the incouragements of it to be ſo difficult, that a Chriſtian ſpirit doth faile him, and he ſhall not be able to looke up, *Pſal.* 40.12.

CASE. III.

Of perſonall unworthineſſe.

IT hath not a little troubled the minds of many of Gods deare children to conſider what unworthy creatures they are in themſelves, and that they are ſo ill deſerving at Gods hands, having no more goodneſſe in them to commend them to Gods acceptation, and love; wee finde them many times complaining, and that with much griefe of heart, that they have nothing in them but ſinne and wickedneſſe, and how ſhould God ever accept ſuch as they are to love, and life, under the preſence of their unworthineſſe? they

they ſtand in their owne light, Satan hereby taking advantage againſt them; This I finde to be a maine maſter-peece of Satans cunning: that before a man is convinced of ſinne, hee maketh him ſo full, and rich, and worthy, that hee cares not for the merits of Chriſt, or the mercy of God, he will not beg, but buy a place in heaven; *Laodicea* was rich, and increaſed with goods, and had need of nothing, not knowing that ſhee was *wretched, and miſerable, and poore, and blind, and naked, Rev.3.17.* The *Corinthians* did ſo ſhine in their owne opinions, and were in ſuch ſelfe credit, that they were rich and full raigning as kings; but when a mans eyes are opened to ſee the ſinnefullneſſe of his ſinnes, then hee makes him

very poore, and his unworthinesse to be such and so great, that it is not for him to thinke of heaven, or mercy, or Christ; a great temptation, under which lieth lurking a white divell. To relieve the soule in this case, I shall propound these few considerations.

1. That if unworthinesse were a sufficient ground to keepe men of from divine favour and eternall happinesse, none of all the sonnes of men could ever be saved, for all have sinned, and by sin made themselves unworthy of mercie.

2. That there is no subjective worthinesse antecedently required unto justification and salvation; God well knew the unworthy condition of *Israel* when hee made them his people,

people, entering into the Covenant of life and peace with them, *Ezek.*16. can you conceive that there was any inherent worthineſſe in them that did lie weltring in their owne blood? beggars are not worthy of almes, traitors are not worthy of pardons, nor ſinfull men worthy of Chriſt or mercy, *Luke* 15.21. and why ſhould we dreame of having a requiſite worthineſſe of our owne? if man had any thing in him, he were altogether unfit to come in unto the free offer of grace; we ſee the invitation is made to the monie-leſſe and merit-leſſe Chriſtian, *Eſa.*55.1.

3. That though worthineſſe be not in the ſtreame, yet it is in the fountaine; and though there be no ſubjective worthineſſe in men, yet there is

an objective worthinesse in Jesus Christ, which is tendred to sinners by grace, and accepted by faith; there is enough in Christ to make our persons lovely and acceptable to God, without whom, if we had all selfe-worthinesse, wee should remaine in Gods eyes most unworthy persons; *This is my beloved Sonne in whom I am well pleased*, saith the Father, *Mat.* 3.17.

Assurances for acceptance under unworthines

4. That notwithstanding mans owne great unworthinesse, there is enough to assure him of divine acceptance; for

First, Mercy in God is full and free, it hath enough in it selfe to incline it selfe to gratious pardons, and favourable acceptances; God doth blot out transgressions, not for mans

mans sake, but for his own sake, *Esa.* 43.25.

Secondly, mans chiefest selfe-worthinesse is to see his owne unworthinesse, and to be humbled for it; certainely, such as have base & low esteemes of themselves, and can dwell upon the guilt and merit of their owne sinnefullnesse, judging themselves to hell for it; such as can (with *Paul*) disclaime from all worth in themselves, and doe see in all their parts, and gifts, and performances an inability to engratiate them with God; such as can in the best of conditions, and after the best of performances, bewaile their weake expressions of duty, acknowledging themselves to be most unprofitable servants, needing the mercy of a God and the merit of Christ;

Esa. 64.6. Luk. 15. 21.

Phil. 3.7.

Luk. 17. 10.

these I say are men of the greatest worthinesse with God; according to the old truth, hee paies best for Heaven that seeth hee hath nothing at all to pay for Heaven.

Thirdly, an unworthy sinner may plead out the Covenant of grace with God, and the freenesse of the tenders of his mercy; I know no man that can or doth more admire and magnifie divine mercy, then a sinner truly sensible of his owne unworthinesse; I know none more desirous of mercy then such; I know none will be more ready to accept of Heaven and favour out of freenesse of grace then such; I know none to whom the offer of salvation purchased by Christ is made but such; and what now doth hinder them from comming in unto

unto God, pleading with him after this or the like manner. "Gratious Lord, I am here before thee for mercy, and for "thy Chriſt, I ſee in my ſelfe "nothing worthy thee or thy "Chriſt; for I am wholy ſinfull; if thou now wilt receive "mee for thine owne, and pardon mee my ſins out of thine "owne free grace, and for the "merit of thine onely Sonne "alone, thou ſhalt ſhew thy ſelfe "a gratious God indeed; O "Lord, that which draweth me "in unto thee for grace, is thine "owne free grace; thou gaveſt "mee the word and hope of "comfort, and therefore I durſt "not ſtand out; Lord, loe heere "I am before thee, without all "confidence in my ſelfe; O let "it be unto me according to the "freeneſſe and richneſſe of thy "mercy,

" mercy, refuse mee not though
" I am unworthy to be called
" thy sonne.

5. That too much standing on selfe-unworthinesse, is many times an argument of secret pride, and opinion of merit; men would faine be some body with God, and doe something for Heaven; Lord how willing is man to have a finger in his owne salvation, and to be at the least a co-adjutor with Christ in the office of his Redemption; when as in truth it is mercy alone that must doe all, and such are most in the way of comfort that referre their spirituall condition unto mercy, setting up and advancing the free favour of God as the onely cause of their spirituall estate, 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. tell mee sadly and seriously thou troubled

bled ſoule, if thou hadſt more goodneſſe in thee, if thy graces were more perfect in thee, and thy ſervices had beene or could be better performed by thee, then thy hopes and aſſurances could and would riſe within thee, then thou couldeſt have confidence and ſettlement within thee? yes, and what is this I pray thee, but the ſpice of pride and ſecret dependance on merit? what wilt thou looke upon thy ſelfe, and within thy ſelfe, and draw out principles of ſalvation from thy ſelfe? how art thou onely beholding to grace and to Chriſt for thy ſalvation when thou thus poreſt and prieſt into thy ſelfe? if thou wilt be a cauſe of thine owne good, thou muſt be a ground of thine owne glory, and if thou wilt bring thy penny,

ny, thou wilt make thy selfe joynt purchaser with Christ; tell mee O Christian, hadst thou all thy desired qualifications, would they or can they equall the favour of God? and durst thou to stand upon this so as to build thy eternall welfare on it? be perswaded out of this vaine and empty conceit of thine, and cease further to perplexe thy soule under the thoughts of thine unworthinesse, God indeed lookes not out of himselfe in the acts of his mercy, but man must looke wholy upon God, and no way upon himselfe, if he intend to be saved and enjoy mercy.

CASE.

CASE. IIII.

Of imperfection and littleneſſe of faith and other graces.

SUch as are men of grace in truth, would be men of grace in perfection, no preſent meaſures can content ſuch; a ſweet and bleſſed temper, and if it were rightly regulated, it would worke to Chriſtians much comfort, and free their mindes of much trouble; but thus it commeth to paſſe, that Chriſtians doe much trouble their mindes with the degrees and meaſures, operations and actions of their graces received; they either comparing themſelves with others intereſſed in the ſame graces with them-

Littlenes of grace apprended.

themſelves, and obſerving that others doe excell them by farre, ſo as no compariſon can be made betweene them; or els they looking into themſelves doe finde their graces beſet with many corruptions, that they can diſcerne much more ſinne in them then grace, that it is in a manner all naught within them; in a word, they finding the pulſe of grace beating ſlowly within; their faith and patience unactive and in a manner idle within them; This I ſay gives them occaſion to queſtion their condition, now ſurely they are not right and ſound, for that they are more imperfect in their graces then others, they goe not forward and increaſe in their graces as others doe; O the eye of their faith is dimme, and doth but

darkly

darkely apprehend the promiſes of God, they doe many times diſcerne the promiſes with miſtakings; fullneſſe and ſetledneſſe of apprehenſion is wanting in them; they cannot come off their carnall reaſonings and ſelfe diſputations, yeelding firmeneſſe and entireneſſe of aſſent unto the truth of Gods promiſes as they ought to doe, their mindes are not yet ſo ſetled, that all is yea and Amen that is ſpoken by God in the promiſes unto them; they often ſay within themſelves, hath God indeed ſaid this and this? and may a man rely upon the word of his promiſe? they cannot caſt anchor ſo as it ſhall faſten; they ſee the ſhore but cannot reach it, and they ſee Chriſt and the promiſes, but cannot apply them, there is an interruption

on

on and ſuſpenſion of the acts of application; as for the perſwaſions of faith in them, they are ſmall or none at all, they cannot ſay that God is their God, and Chriſt their Chriſt, and this they make to be their death and burden, under which eſtate we ſhall ſhew you that Chriſtians have not ſo much cauſe of creating perplexities to themſelves as many times they doe; conſider with mee,

Ten releevements to the ſoule under imperfection of grace.

1. That a little grace is better then no grace; it is the want of grace that is damnable, and may cauſe a man to cloſe up againſt himſelfe all aſſurance and ſettlement; tell mee O Chriſtian, wouldſt thou change thy poore condition in grace for the greateſt graceleſſe condition in the world? wilt thou part from that grace thou haſt for

for any or all the ſeeming plea ſures of ſinne? I dare ſay thou wouldſt not, then be quieted in thy minde, and do not fooliſhly argue the nullity of a gratious condition from the imperfection of thy graces.

2. That a little grace requireth a great deale of thankes, it comming from the God of all grace and being an argument of ſound ſanctification; ſhall I ſay that it is not the way of thankfullneſſe to make little of any divine mercy; we are too little for the leaſt meaſure by reaſon of our unworthineſſe; and we doe not well to undervalew the leaſt proportion and gift of grace.

3. That which one man makes little unto himſelfe, would be a great deale with many other Chriſtians; wee finde

finde in experience, that the rich mans complaint would be the poore mans content; many poore ſoules could well feaſt themſelves with the fragments that come from their tables, when as they doe fooliſhly and proudly complaine of want; juſt ſo it is with many Chriſtians, they tell us that grace is weake and ſmall in them, when other Chriſtians reaſoning with them, and hearing them complaine, do bleſſe God for their eſtate in grace, and would be exeeeding glad were they in their condition of grace.

4. That men of no grace are never troubled and truly humbled about ſmallneſſe and weakneſſe of grace, the eyes of ſuch are not yet opened to ſee their ſpirituall wants.

5. That little grace is an argument

gument of grace in the ſoule; a little man is a man, and a little faith is faith; grace in truth hath a being in weakeneſſe it ſelfe, and though it be in the loweſt meaſures, there the ſoule hath an intereſt in God, in Chriſt, in the promiſes and in heaven, little faith can and doth lay hold of great things, and prooves unto Chriſtians a great aſſurance.

6. Little grace is a creature of God which hee will not deſpiſe or forſake; *Doth God deſpiſe the day of ſmall things?* will any tender mother caſt off her babe becauſe it is weake? and ſhall we imagine that God will not accept according to that a man hath, be it never ſo little? Chriſtians be perſwaded that grace in truth though never ſo ſmall is for acceptance. Zach. 4. 10.

7. Little

7. Little grace will doe much, it many times doth that in and for Christians under weakenesse that all the world cannot doe for them, it is their light in darkenesse, their life in death, and their upholdment from sinking; the widdowes little oile and little meale went a great way, God blessing it; and thus it is with little grace, it will carry a man thorough the whole world and doe mighty things for him; the great advantages of a little grace is unspeakeable.

8. That grace in weakneſſe is made for strength, and grace in littleneſſe is fitted for increase, our graces passe from imperfection to perfection, and from weakeneſſe unto strength; Gods strength being made perfect in mans weakneſſe; weak-

2 Cor. 12 9.

neſſe

neſſe doth both call in and ſet out the glory of divine aſſiſtance: conſider, that he who hath moſt grace hath not all he ſhould have, and hee who hath leaſt in grace hath not all that he would have, both meaſures are riſing up unto greater perfections; little grace is in a ſtate of growth, and in and by the uſe of meanes it is enlarged, as wee may ſee in *Nicodemus* and all new borne Chriſtians, whoſe growth is much in parts and powers of their graces: they have riſen from ſmall beginnings to moſt admirable perfections.

9. That gifts of Sanctification and appertaining unto mens ſalvation are different and unequall, grace is alike in nature, but not alike in meaſure in all; the different ſtandings of

of Christians in Christianity and grace, is set out unto us both in the comparisons and appellations of them in Scripture; they are compared to branches, starres, sheepe, and the members of the body; we reade of men and babes, fathers and children; all men be not of one stature, nor all trees of one growth, nor all Christians of equall grace; to some is given a greater, to others a lesser measure of grace; grace in one is much and strong, in another little and weake, sincere in both, but absolutely perfect in none; Note with mee two things.

Graces are two waies considerable. 1 *Quoad esse & habitum.*

1. That all degrees of Christians doe agree together in the substantiall part of grace, every man hath the same spirit of ho-

holineſſe; knowledge, faith, repentance, love, &c. is alike in them all, flowing from one and the ſame common fountaine.

2. That the varying of Chriſtians is much in the active part of grace, they may have their ſeverall agilities, ſo as one man may know more then another, one man may pray more fervently and frequently then another, and ſo is it in the reſt of all required duties; mee thinkes that it is with Chriſtians in this caſe as it is with men in nature; every man hath a ſoule, and faculties from that ſoule, and actions iſſuing out of

2. *Quoad operari & exercitium*

Simile.

those faculties, yet every man is not equall in the expressive waies of nature.

A question about the causes of inequality of measures and operations of graces in Christians

But you will querie, whence doth this inequality of graces and holy operations arise?

I answer, not from nullity and falseneſſe of grace, as weake Christians do surmiſe; but

1. From the wiſe diſpenſation of God, who giveth grace to every man according to his owne good will and pleaſure, and followeth his owne meaſures with the ſame proportion of aſſiſtance as he thinks beſt.

2. From the variety of particular occaſions; every Chriſtian hath not alike forcible occaſion given him to exerciſe his graces.

3. From the variety of particular ends; God intends ſome Chri-

Christians for some singular end and services to which hee fits them by the great improovement and use of their graces.

4. From the variety of particular assistance; every man hath not at all times an equall gale or breath of the Spirit to enlighten, affect, excite, and draw them onward in acting of their graces.

5. From the variation of naturall tempers; bodily constitution conduceth much to the actions of the soule and by consequence to the expression of graces.

6. From the sinfullnesse and carelesnesse of some Christians above others, when as thorough the conceit of the eminency of their graces, they doe swell with pride, when they cannot be thankfull for gra-

ces and abilities formerly received, when their imaginations are meane of graces bestowed, they thinking that they will not serve turne to their salvation; in a word, when they are inconstant in duties and doe not stirre up the graces in them, wisely watching the motions of the Spirit, and improoving the seasons of grace; this is the thing which occasioneth the inequality spoken of.

10. That no man misseth of Heaven for want of measures, but for want of the truth of grace; I grant a Christians consolation lieth much in the comparative degree, but his salvation is in the positive degree of grace, though one Christian cannot beleeve as strongly as another, yet beleeving he shall be saved as well as another; little-

nesse

nesse and greatnesse of grace do agree in saving issue; a weak and a soare eye in the *Israelites* did behold the brazen Serpent to health as well as a sound and cleare eye, the hand of a little child can lay hold of a pretious Jewell given unto it, just so is it here, difference in proportion and in operation of graces may stand with truth of grace and assurance of Heaven, one man rides faster then another, yet both meet at length in the same Inne; one ship makes more speed then another, yet both put in at the same harbour; and one Christian hath more grace and doth more duty then another, yet both shall meete in one Christ and Heaven.

CASE. V.

Of failings in duties.

WHen Christians doe looke upon their services publike or private which they doe performe unto God, they finde many failings, especially in the manner of their performance; Lord with what dullnesse and deadnesse and distraction of spirit doe Christians pray, and heare, and meditate, and humble themselves, &c. upon this doe many Christians misjudge themselves, concluding against their selfe-sincerity and soules comfort; now nothing is well done by them, and why should they pray and reade, and heare, and receive

receive Sacraments any more; it is but to sinne, and it will but increase their judgement, this is a bitter and most desperate temptation, and once given way unto, doth leade a man farre into sinne and trouble, for when once a man so taketh exceptions against himselfe for doing duties, that hee will put himselfe out of the way of duty, how easily doth he make himselfe a prey unto Satan?

To the releevement of the soule under this burden, I shall yeeld you these meditations following.

Five settlings against failings in duties.

1. That the best of Gods servants have beene, are, and may be indisposed in holy duties; though the spirit of *Peter* be willing, yet the flesh was weak, and there being contrary Mat. 26. 41

lustings of the flesh against the Spirit, a Christian cannot doe the things he would; O how doth flesh clog and dull the best of Gods Saints? there is within them a living spring without a lively operation; the spring I say is open, but the operation narrow, so as it is with them in the manner of their performing duties, as it is with a sick man, he would faine walke a turne about his chamber, but alas he cannot doe it his body is so weake.

Gal. 5. 17

Simile.

2. That there is a wide difference betweene a heart that is dead unto duty, and a dull and indisposed heart in duty; a dead heart wants a living spring and is contrary unto all duty; as it falls off from duty, so it gives it selfe an allowance and dispensation in the same, and

and can and doth finde no trouble within it selfe under all *non*-performances of duties; whereas a Christian under all his uneveneſſe in duties, hath an inward intention and inclination unto duties, ſuch men in their dulleſt times and greateſt indiſpoſitions ſee not more duties then they would doe, and are grieved becauſe they cannot doe duties in a more lively and ſpirituall manner; ſuch ſtand up from the dead and are ready for divine employment, there is a praying ſpirit in them; ſo as they can ſay with *Paul, the good that I would I doe not.* Rom. 7. 19.

There are two evidences when the bent of a mans heart is for duties in a living and right way.

First, when a heavie kinde of performing duties is diſpleaſing

and contrary unto the frame of the ſoule and ſpirit of a man; ſuch men ſet upon duties, ſorrowfully, and performe duties with feare, and riſe from duties humbled, greatly blaming themſelves for the heavineſſe and diſtraction of ſpirit which they obſerve to be in themſelves.

Secondly, when the deſires are riſing out of the ſtate of indiſpoſition, ſuch men eaſily faſten upon the waies of quickning and bettering themſelves in duty, expecting that they may be ſhaken out of their fits of dullneſſe: I dare ſay that ſuch men will reade the more, and pray the more, and heare the more, hoping to finde ſome helpe in the uſe of the ordinances and performances of duties, they have heard and do find it

to be true, that frequencie in duty begets fervencie, that as a man by often rubbing of his benummed parts may get heate, so a Christian by forcing himselfe to the going over of duties, doth get strength against his dullnesse in duty. Simile.

3. That when a Christian cannot doe duties with that life he should and would doe, yet he may doe them with much sincerity and uprightnesse of heart, and in a farre different way from a formall and carnall Christian; I yeeld unto this, that an hypocrite who hath a name to live may talke much of duty and may mount high into the visible duties of holinesse, applying himselfe to many religious actions; the Jewes were not failing in their services and sacrifices, and solemne assemblies;

blies; but yet they came short of sincerity, and so all was lost labour unto them.

Seven differences betweene an hypocrite and a Christian in doing duties.

You may aske mee what is the difference betwixt an hypocrite and a sincere Christian in doing duties?

I answer, it is much every way; which may bee seene in seven things.

First, a Christian doth performe all duties by the power of spirituall life wrought within his soule, he praieth, and beleeveth, and reades, and heares in the Spirit by vertue of the working of the Spirit; the principle of life in the soule is sufficient to it selfe to act required duties, it needs not altogether those naturall and accidentall helpes which false Christians must have to set them on worke; the bird flies in the aire from a prin-

principle of life and motion in himselfe, whereas a clock being a dead thing mooveth, because the weights are powerfull to the wheeles. *Simile.*

Secondly, a Christian is more generall or universall in the performance of duties then any hypocrite can be; he sets himselfe to duties of every kinde, even those of the highest nature and excellencie; duties required admit of a distinction, there are the greater and the lesser things of the Law; there are some duties which strike at the quick and call for strictnesse, such as are selfe-deniall, sinnes-mortification, the sanctifying of God in a mans thoughts, desires, and speeches in all the conditions of life; some duties there are, which are exceeding high and climbing,

ing, as beleeving in God and in Christ, and keeping the conversation in Heaven; to conclude, there are ordinary and extraordinary duties, publique and private duties, costly and painefull duties, and all these the spirit of soundnesse is for, Christians are ready to act all as well as one duty of holinesse; looke which way duty (whose latitude is much, and parts many) divides it selfe, thither they dispose themselves; that as water will runne in all prepared channels, so a Christian followeth all required duties, whereas hypocrisie doth duties with partiality and delicacie, it serves and divides duties, it will be upon this, but not on that duty, and is neither whole nor lively in any duty; and no marvaile, for as

waters

waters cannot rise higher then their springs, no more can an hypocrite rise higher then himselfe in duty. *Simile.*

Thirdly, a Christian doth act spirituall duties spiritually, in the purpose and resolution of his heart hee doth empty himselfe of flesh and corruption (which will be creeping into duty) as much as may be; such an one undertakes no duty but with selfe-examination and soule-humiliation for sin committed and remaining within, such follow the Law of the spirit, exercising all vouchsafed graces in the performance of duties; Christians indeed doe heare and pray with much knowledge, faith, feare, humility, &c. and by reason of the performance of the duty they become more spirituall;

I say a Christian in duty is another man from what he is at other times; such heavenly raptures and soule-raviſhments doe befall him, that in a manner he feeles no world, no place, no time; whereas a formall Christian is a baſe and mixt metrall, formality leades him into duties carnall, keepes him in duties carnall, and brings him off from duties not onely carnall, but much more ſinnefull and prophane then he was before.

Fourthly, a Christian doth performe duties encreasingly; his desires are such and so great unto duty, that he cannot give himselfe any satisfaction in doing duties; his ſpirit within him is like unto leaven which is of a rising nature, or to the graine of mustard-seed which

was

was of a spreading nature; the soule will be carried with vehement desire of bettering it selfe in duty, and performing more and more duty unto God, nay it riseth in duty against opposition, that as a living spring doth worke out its way against dammings and stoppings up, so a sound Christian will do duties wrastling with his owne lyther and sluggish nature, yea and withstanding Satan in his temptations; oile can be no more kept under by water then a Christian can be kept of from duty and increasings in duties. I grant that at the first a Christian is and may be little and low in duty, but at length an enlargement will follow answerable to the life bestowed and duties to be performed; *Davids* spring at sometimes did but drop gently, *Simile.*

gently, at other times it did run freely and fully, whereas the hypocrite keepes him in a circle or compasse, he is confined and limited, and is much like unto artificiall bodies uncapable of extension; restings and sufficits overtake such men, and if there be any swellings in duties, it is not from an incorporated principle of grace which is within as a feeding spring, but from some externall reason and influence; there may be the rising of waters in a pond by the powring downe of raine from the clouds, and duties may be done by an hypocrite with much abundance whilst judgements or mercies are stirring.

Simile.

Fifthly, a Christian exerciseth himselfe in spirituall duties chearefully, such do spirituall

ruall actions pleasingly, as with willingnesse of heart, so with gladnesse of heart, it is meate and drinke and recreation unto them to performe spirituall duties, *Exod.* 35. 29. *Psal.* 100. 2. *Psal.* 110. *verse* 3. *Ephes.* 6. 5, 6. whereas hypocrisie is of a Bearish nature, slow to the duty; it is mooved, it mooves not it selfe; to a formall heart 1. Spirituall duties are grievous and tedious, and though something be done, yet it is with secret wearinesse, reluctancie, and unwillingnesse, there are many objections raised up against duties, and many cases and questions which must be answered and resolved before such can set on to duty. 2. The closing up of spirituall duties is very pleasing and delightfull, the Lord knoweth that

that as in his heart hee wisheth there were no time or duties belonging to God, so hee is glad of a suddaine release from all duties, the shorter the Sermon and the shorter the prayers the more pleasing, such is the incongruity of spirituall services with carnall hearts, and if that any joy and delight be in them at all, it is but false and vanishing.

Sixthly, a Christian doth performe duties constantly; such men have everlasting spirits in serving God, and though there may be pawses and certaine cessations by reason of some intervenient accidents, yet a totall and finall cessation in duty cannot overtake Christians; grace in truth never dieth unto duty, but holds out unto the very last in beleeving, obeying,

obeying, and praying, whereas an hypocrite according to his false and vanishing principles is mutable and inconstant in duty; according to that speech, *Will the hypocrite delight himselfe in the Almighty? Will hee alwaies call upon GOD?* Job 27.10 sometimes hee may, but at all times he neither can, nor will pray.

Seventhly, a Christian doth act all required duties discreetly and wisely; I meane with the observation of the rules and requisites and methods which wisedome it selfe doth declare unto men in and for the performance of duties; such will principally doe those duties which are suitable and proper to themselves, their relations, and conditions; they moove within their owne orbe, whereas

whereas hypocrisie wanders from its owne nest, praying abroad in other mens families, but not in its own family; such will manage duties mooving on-ward in a just proportion; they spend not all the time in duties of faith, and duties of charity alone, but so doe one act of godlinesse that they may doe another also, one businesse doth not put by another with them, as it doth with hypocrites, who in doing of some duties hinder themselves in other; in a word, such are seasonable in doing duties; though no time be unseasonable for Christian duties, yet all duties must not be performed at all times; Christians must heare when God requires them to heare, and pray when God requireth them to pray, they must bring forth all their

fruit

fruit in the ſeaſon of it; whereas the ſervice of hypocriſie is fruit out of ſeaſon, ſuch as are formall will be comming to Church when others are going from Church, they will pray when they ſhould heare, and reade when they ſhould pray, which maketh their ſervice the ſacrifice of fooles, *Eccleſ.* 5. 1. Pſal. 1 3.

4. That in the doing of Chriſtian duties the bent of the heart is both obſerved and accepted of God; you cannot forget the counſell of *David* unto *Salomon*, *Know thou the God of thy Father, and ſerve him with a perfect heart and a willing minde, for the Lord ſearcheth all hearts, and underſtandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts, if thou ſeeke him hee will be found of thee:* out 1 Chron. 28 9.

of

of which place we gather, that God doth behold the heart in duty; and him that prepareth his heart to seeke him, *though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the Sanctuary shall be accepted with him*; view well the sincerity of your performances, and let it cheare you against your weaknesses.

1 Chron. 30.19,20

5. That Christians under weaknesse of performances, must have an eye unto Christ who appeares for them in Heaven, presenting all services done unto the acceptation of his Father; learne to know, that what we cannot doe perfectly, Christ did it for us, his active obedience being imputed to us, and though duties come from us in much weaknesse, yet Christ makes up our duties as well as our persons; a sincere heart must

act duties, a gratious God must accept duties, a mighty Redeemer must present duties, *the Angell had a golden Censer and much incense that he should offer it with the prayers of the Saints upon the golden altar*; wee know that the acceptation of a Christians best services is in Christ alone, and it is no life in our duties that can make them meritorious with God, yea and it is no impotency in duties which can cause God to reject them, if we by faith betake our selves to Christ; In Christ there is sufficiencie of merit to cover all our selfe-blamed indispositions, and to gaine the acceptance of all our sincere, though weake performances. Rev. 8. 3.

IN CASE.

CASE. VI.

Of fruitlesse endeavours.

MAn looketh for wages when hee hath done his work; and if duty and service proove successeleſſe that hee finde no returne or recompence at all, this is not a little grieving and sadding unto the Spirit; we heare Christians thus complaining, "I have along time waited "upon God in service, I have "beene conversant with him in "his Ordinances, many a Ser-"mon have I heard, many a Sa-"crament have I received; I "have humbled my soule before "him in prayer, and teares, and "fasting, and I alas can find no "return of my prayers, I cannot "get

"get any thing at Gods hands,
"my corruptions are yet within
"me, I am still where I was, and
"am no better, and can doe no
"more then formerly, my abili-
"ties are as little, and my com-
"forts as few as ever; surely all
"is not well with mee, and all is
"not even betwixt God and my
"soule; how goeth his promise
"along with mee, seeing I finde
"no performance to mee? here
"the soule is musing and doubt-
"full.

To ease the soule under this distresse, I shall propose these things.

1. That no man shall doe the least service for God which shall be in vaine unto himselfe; God is a good Master, as hee sets us about the best worke, so he will give us the best wages, no man shall serve God for

Mal. 1. 10. 1 Cor. 15. ult.

nought; wee see that God taketh it ill when the Jewes charged him with neglect and irrecompence for their serving of him, *Mal.* 3. 13, 14, 15.

2. That want of present wages must not dishearten Christians in the doing of their duties; up and be doing, and trust God for wages; service and progresse in duties belongs to us, and their rewards and recompences belong to God; we must doe our part, and *not be wearie in well-doing: for in due season wee shall reape if we faint not*; the husband-man is to plow the land, and to sow the corne if he expect the harvest, and so Christians must first doe their duties of hearing, and praying, and reading, if they will have Gods wages.

Gal. 6. 9.

3. That

3. That unto our present doing, we must add waiting and expectation; *Our eyes waite upon the Lord till he have mercy upon us*, saith *David*; if beggars will not stay they loose their almes, and if Christians will not waite they may loose their grants; and why should wee not waite? in all Gods promises there is such a truth which shall be performed, and hee hath made many pretious promises unto waiting for the performance of his promises; *None shall bee ashamed that waite on mee, Esa.49.23. David waited upon God and hee enclined to him and heard his cry, Psal. 40.1.* Psal.123. 2.

4. That the Lords answers of good shall at length recompence and equall all the services and patience of man; how

ever for the present God deferre his comforts, and put off thy complaints, and the time is long and tedious unto thee, yet know, that a Christian is sure to speed well with God at the last, and he shall have his recompences in the best things at the best time, there is a time and day which God will not overpasse; *The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speake and shall not lie, though it tarry, waite for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry, Hab.2.3.* Thou hast done God much service and made many prayers unto him, and yet nothing commeth of it, waite and thou shalt never repent thee of thy paines and patience; consider but these three things.

1. That a man cannot waite too

too long for promiſed mercies, they being the moſt excellent and uſefull of all mercies for Chriſtians.

2. That God is wiſe and good in cauſing ſpaces betweene our endeavours and his recompences; God herein is either chaſtning ſome former neglect of accepting grace offered in the day of grace; or preparing the ſoule for the receiving and enjoying of his recompences.

3. That the longer any one ſtayeth without Gods wages, the better and greater it ſhall be when it comes; *God will give unto his their wages with an increaſe, hee will give them double comfort*, Eſa. 40. 2. doubt not of this but that God will fulfill your deſires to the full, and comforts firſt or laſt ſhall

come in such a plentifull measure, that they shall make amends for all; *Abraham* waited long for *Isaack*, and hee had him at the last, and though the world recompence the best worke with the worst wages, yet God doth not soe, but will crowne all our endeavours to his owne praise and the comfort of his.

CASE. VII.

Of Relapses into sinnes after resolutions and promises and pardons.

THe impudencies of sin are such, that they make their returnes upon the chast hearts of Gods Saints, and the weakenesse of Chri-

Christians is such that they fall into sinne often, multiplying sinne very farre, and here they rest not, but many times notwithstanding purposes and promises and better resolutions they slacke againe in their watchfullnesse, and notwithstanding their recovery out of sinnes, they returne againe unto folly and act the same sinnes againe; it may happen to them as unto many men under their diseases; they may in some good measure recover strength and health, and there may be certaine discontinuations of the violent workings of the disease, but yet there may be a falling back of them into the same disease even unto great danger; just so, they may not onely lapse and receive a recovery out of the same by the hand of mercy,

Relapsing into sinne what it is.

but after a long ſpace of diſcontinuance, even when they have ſeemed to have parted from their old finneſull practiſes, they may be brought backe againe to the ſecond acting of the ſame ſinnes; which evill doth befall them upon theſe or the like grounds.

Cauſes of relapſes nine.

1. From boldneſſe without a warrant, they adventuring upon their owne ſtrength, and forgetting the ſtrength of ſinfull occaſions; preſumptuous patients feeling their legs againe, will abroad into the aire, and finding ſome appetite will feed on any kinde of forbidden meate, and hereby they fall backe againe; and preſumptuous ſinners ſoone forget themſelves and relapſe into ſinne.

2. From feare againſt the pro-

promiſe, they having their eyes too open unto troubles which they deſire to ſhun, and out of feare of enduring miſery, they have adventured ſo farre, that they have miſerably brought themſelves downe againe by ſinne; I know nothing which made *Abraham* more to redouble his lying then the redoubling of his feares, he had his eyes too much upon the preſervation of his life, he was afraid that they would kill him for his *Sarahs* ſake, and therefore once and againe hee hazarded her chaſtity, and his owne truth. Gen. 12. 13. & 20. 11.

3. From diſlike without a cauſe; diſcontentednesſe among the *Iſraelites* made them in their ſoules to long the ſecond time for the fleſh pots of Egypt, though Egypt was formerly unto

unto them a houſe of bondage, the deſire of alteration, and mens unwillingneſſe to be that which God would have them to be, hath beene and is a great cauſe of their fearefull relapſes into ſinnes.

4. From ſtanding without a watch; when Chriſtians minde not a falling whilſt that they are ſtanding; but remit their watch, and holy jealouſie, omitting the meanes of ſtedfaſtneſſe, they quit their owne ſtrength of ſtanding, and quickly relapſe; if a ſicke man grow careleſſe of his diet, or a lame man throw away his crutches, and a Chriſtian grow mindleſſe of his falling, they are in a like condition of ſlipping back.

5. From ſtraites without faith; croſſes not borne by faith have returned many to

their old way, the want of water and bread, caused the *Israelites* more then once or twice to glide into the sins of murmuring and distrust.

6. From company without choise; all society hath a force in it, it brings with it fire or water; it is an encouragement, or discouragement unto sinne; the *Israelites*, being mingled among the Heathens, learned their works, and fell to Idolatry the second time, *Psal.*106.35. flaming brands will not more set on fire quenched sticks, then sinfull companies will revive dead purposes unto sinfullnesse; experience sheweth that the joyning with old companions, hath made men to resume their former excesse of riot, contrary unto their former resolutions and promises.

7. From

7. From the Spirit without assistance; if the Spirit take away his hand, or deny his actuall assistance, the Christian presently relapseth; take away the fire from the water and it will returne to its native coldnesse; let the Sun once set and the ayre will returne to its wonted darknesse, and let the Spirit (which is our strength) once withdraw or suspend, and wee sinke, and fall, and sinne, and sinne againe.

Simile.

8. From extremities forgotten; time was that Christians did finde and feele the bitternesse and horror of sinne, the stinging effects thereof remaining fresh and sensible in the conscience, and then they did abhorre and feare to sinne, they did vow and promise not to sinne; take a drunkard that hath

hath ſurfeted with wine or ſtrong drink, and whilſt hee is under the ſcorchings of his ſinſickneſſe, bring unto him wine and ſtrong drink, O he cannot abide it; but when the ſickneſſe is over, and the experiments of ſinnes extremity buried, he will riſe from the ſmaller beere to the ſtrong, and from that to the ſtrongeſt wine againe, and as certaine it is that when men do forget what their ſins have coſt them, they will gradually ſlide into their old courſe of ſinning againe.

9. From brethren deſpiſed; there is a great evill among Chriſtians; they are not onely many times ungroundedly too too ſuſpicious, over-credulous and cenſorious of their brethren; but over incompaſſionate and ſtrangely inſulting over their

their brethren in their failings, especially where they least affect, wee shall heare such griefeleſſe and diſgracing narrations of Chriſtians miſcarriages, even by Chriſtians themſelves, that it would make a man to queſtion whe her all wiſdome and mercy be not baniſhed out of their hearts; now when God ſeeth this proud and envious and ſpiteſull ſpirit in any of his owne children, hee lets them alſo be tempted, and under temptations they are permitted to fall, that they may learne to be more merciſull to the names of their brethren, and to make them know that the ſinne that overturnes one Chriſtian may overturne any Chriſtian, and that one Chriſtian ſeeing another to fall, ſhould compaſſionately

helpe

helpe him up, and not scornefully cast him off; reade *Gal.6.1.*

These things with many other causing the relapsing of Christians into sinne, do make the soules of Christians under its relapsings heavie and sad; they considering within themselves that the baseneſſe of relapsing is likened to the *dog turning to his vomit, and the sow that is washed wallowing in the mire*, it doth greatly trouble and disquiet them; concerning the setling of Christians labouring under this evill, I shall onely propound five things of principall knowledge and use. 2 Pet. 2. 22.

Five settlements under relapses.

First, that all Relapsings into sinne are great evills, wheresoever they are found; relapsing argueth corruption, yea, and a sinfull disposition in man; There is not onely the evill of sin

sinne in this condition, but we shall finde many bitter effects and issues befalling Christians under their relapses, for they do not onely hereby object themselves to many temporall punishments, *Psal.* 78. 61, 62, 63. but unto these foure spirituall evills.

1. Soule-disquietment, the peace of conscience being broken by every relapse; I say relapses are of a disquieting nature to conscience in these five respects.

Relapses disquieting to conscience in five respects.

1. Because they bring back all former guilts, and with that all the former burdens and feares and terrors.
2. Because they yeeld unto conscience matter of undeniable accusation; the doubling of sin doth double

double the accuſation and vexation of conſcience.

3. Becauſe they are the aggravation of ſinne unto man.

4. Becauſe they make the foundations and reſting places of the ſoule queſtionable, relapſes put a man to cleare and proove his former grants and aſſurances to Heaven, and his owne ſincerity to God, and in Religion.

5. Becauſe they doe greatly advantage temptations unto deſpaire; Chriſtians are never more apt to deſpaire then upon the conſideration of their often falling into ſinne.

2. Diſ-

2. Discouragement in all accesses unto God; the Christian cannot with that confidence and boldnesse draw neare unto God in prayer having relapsed, as els hee might have done; how can such beleeve that God will love them, and heare them, when as they have dealt so falsly with him, having promised him not to sinne, and mocked and abused him in his mercy and pitty and patience, hee having formerly pardoned them their sins.

3. Disablement unto renewed repentance; Now Christians doe finde it more difficult to returne from sinne, their soules being sunke deeper into sinne, and more entangled by sinne then formerly it was; take mee a Christian that is but single in sinne, and hee findeth the

the difficulties of repenting to be great; but how doth Satan renew his power, and a Chriſtian looſe his ſtrength, when that the ſame ſinnes are repeated over and over; aſſuredly there is ſtrange ſtrengthenings of ſin in relapſing into ſinnes, one ſinne living in and by another.

4. Feares of death, O how unwelcome is the newes of death, and how unwilling are ſuch to die who have often fallen into the ſame ſinnes? Relapſes doe put a ſting into death, making it very terrible unto the ſonnes of men.

2. That the Elect of God may fall backe againe into the ſame ſinnes; there is I ſay a poſſible incideney of relapſing unto perſons of all ſorts: it is moſt certaine, that wicked men

who

who are ordained to destruction may relapse, *Pharaoh* though humbled for the present, did notwithstanding harden his heart againe and againe; yea and they who are good and holy and have soundly repented them of their former sins may yet relapse: the example of *Abraham*, *Lot*, *Peter*, and *Israel* doth declare it, how often doth God lay this sinne unto the charge of his people? *Ier.* 3.12. & 14.22. *Psal.* 78. 57. and no marvaile, for though their repentance be found, yet their mortification is imperfect in this life; there is no sinfull disposition wholy rooted up, and dried in sanctified persons, and corruption remaining will put forth its nature into more and more acts, yea and into the same acts of sinning; as long as sinne

retaines its nature, it doth and will retaine the inclinations and operations of that nature alſo; if the fire be not wholy put out, who will thinke it impoſſible that it ſhould catch and burne againe?

3. That though the act of relapſing be incident both to good and bad, yet it is in a differing manner, which I ſhall open unto you in the diſtinctions of relapſings.

Relapſes into ſinne by the godly different from relapſes into ſin by the wicked.

Firſt, there are relapſes { 1. Naturall. 2. Accidentall.

Relapſes 1 Naturall

Naturall relapſes are ſuch as ſpring from a diſpoſition and temper that is wholy ſinnefull and for ſinne; if a man by a coard pluck up very high the weight of a jack or clock, yet it hath a naturall propenſion to fall downe againe; you need not drive the ſow to the mire, nor

Simile.

the

the dog unto his vomit, their owne naturall love and delight will returne them; the truth is, that though externall and intervenient occasions may pen up or restraine the violence of corruption for a time, yet such is the inward disposition of a naturall man unto sinne, that hee soone returnes to his old course againe; skin up the soare and the ulcer will breake out againe, and if the heart be not changed, but chained by the power of restraining graces alone, man will returne to his old vomit and vaine course.

2. Accidentall.

Accidentall Relapses are such which befall the godly by sudden and strong temptations; a land flood may carry back pieces of timber from the banke into the remote places of the

the ground; an unexpected gale may drive the Marriner backe into the harbour againe, and it is as poſſible that temptations may breake in with that violence, that Chriſtians may bee over-borne, and carried away to thoſe ſinnes which their ſoules doe moſt ſincerely abhorre, and they have ſolemnely covenanted againſt, yet here the effect and the intention are contrary, heart and ſinne being at difference and upon tearmes of defiance.

Secondly, Relapſes may be either into the acts of ſinne, or elſe into the exerciſe of ſinne; one ſick perſon falls back into ſome fits onely, another returneth under the power of his diſeaſe againe; the godly man falls backe into ſome particular

sinne, but there he staieth not, for though he fall hee riseth againe; hee is as a man fallen into the water, but he gets out quickly; the wicked falls backe into the courses of sinne againe, lying downe in their falling backe, their end being worse then their beginning.

Relapses 1 Voluntary.

Thirdly, Relapses are { 1. Voluntary. 2. Involuntary.

Voluntary Relapses are such as have the propension & complacencie of the heart in them; the sea doth as naturally ebb, as it doth flow, and wicked men make their returnes unto sinfull courses with much more delight then their departures; O how glad is a Jayle-bird of the opportunity of liberty to goe to his old haunts? and much more joyfull is every wicked

wicked man when he is at liberty to feed himſelfe upon his ſinfull pleaſures, hee doth even bewaile his miſery that hee was kept ſo long from them.

2. Involuntary.

Involuntary Relapſes are ſuch as ariſe contrary to the intention and affection of perſons, it is not the pure love of ſin that drawes backe the godly into ſinning againe, which may appeare in the conſequent of their relapſing, they are not now, as a fiſh newly taken out and newly leapt againe into the water, in their proper element, a ſinfull way and courſe cannot be agreeable to their ſoules, they finde no reſt in a ſinning condition, but their ſoules are ſick and ſad, they weepe and are troubled exceedingly, and can receive no comfort in

themselves untill they see themselves recovered againe; as wee may see in *David* and *Peter*.

Fourthly, there are Relapses in { 1. Conquest. 2. Combate.

Relapses 1. In conquest.

Relapses in conquest is when a man out of malice and obstinacie of heart, without all ground or cause is carried backe againe as a slave unto his sinfull doings; some men never stick at the matter, their hearts find no manner of stop, and nothing within puts an impediment to their returnes; the heart and the sinne are now in league, and they like the way of sinne exceedingly; the state of wicked men in returning to their sinnes, is much answering to the returnes of a man unto his bed to take his rest and sleepe, hee loveth his

his bed and vexeth at every thing that keepes him from going into it; just so the heart of every wicked man likes the sin, but hates the impediment, nothing at all doth awe him from sinning againe, but the shame and punishment of sin; and he accounts that word and friend his enemy which stops him in sinning.

Relapses in combate is, when a man is reduced to his old sin, but it is with much feare, secret reluctancie, and some oppositi-on; *I see another law in my members warring against the law of my minde, and bringing mee into captivity to the law of sinne*, saith *Paul*, a good man relapseth resisting; his reducing into sinne is much after the manner of the bringing backe of an escaped prisoner, when

a In combate.

Rom. 7. 23

hee espies such as would take him hee runnes from them, and hides from them, and hee is not easily laid hold of or brought home againe, many escapes he makes by the way, and would rather die in the place then returne; and so surely doth a Christian strive with griefes and teares and prayers against all returnes into sinne.

Relapses are 1. Hurtfull

Fifthly, Relapses in respect of their effects 1. Pernicious. 2. Profitable.

The unsound heart by falling backe into sinne, growes more and more hardned and insensible, more careleſse and froward in sinning, more free and forward in sinning; acting his old sinnes with greater love and delight then ever.

2. Helpfull

God doth good men good by

by their relapsings; though there bee no good in sinne, yet it is good that sinne be, and the wisedome of God can and doth turne it unto the good of his, I say this is the accidentall effect of the godly mans falling into sinne, greater humiliation and sorrow, greater watchfullnesse and feare, greater dependance on God, stronger covenants and resolutions, deeper loathings, and greater conquest over sinnes; In these five distinctions you may observe the difference of relapse in good and bad men.

4. That the sinne of relapsing is pardonable; it is such a sinne which God hath pardoned, and hee can and will pardon; Christ doth tell us, *that all manner of sinne and blasphemie shall bee forgiven unto men*

excepting that against the Holy Ghost, Mat.12.31. under that phrase of all manner of sinne relapsing is included; God doth not shut the gate of mercy against all relapsing sinners, and because this is made a ground of trouble unto many Christians, that they doe conceive such a sinne cannot be pardoned, I will briefely evidence the pardonablenesse of Relapses.

Two reasons prooving the pardonablenesse of relapses.

First, that sinne unto which the promise of curing is made, is pardonable to Gods children; for God never cures sin, but where hee first covers it; but the promise of healing is made unto backsliding; *Returne yee backesliding children, and I will heale your backslidings*, saith God, *Ier.3.22. Hosea 14. 4.*

Se-

Secondly, that ſinne is pardonable to Chriſtians, unto which is annexed a poſſibility of repentance; for God hath promiſed pardoning mercy to penitent ſinners; but a Chriſtian may repent of it, for repentance was required of backſliding *Iſrael*, *Returne*, ſaith God, yea and it was practiſed alſo, *Behold wee come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God*; conſider ſeriouſly of of *Peters* condition, were not his bitter and briniſh teares the repenting of his folly in ſo often denying his maſter? Jer. 3. 22.

5. That as there are meanes to keepe from relapſing, ſo there are meanes to deliver out of relapſing into ſinne; wee may not weakely conceive, that becauſe wee have made our returnes into ſinne contrary

unto our promiſes and purpoſes, that we ſhall never get out of them againe; this is the way to keepe the ſoule in hell upon earth; I grant you

Delivery from relapſes

1. That revolting into ſinne is greatly diſpleaſing to God.

1. Difficult

2. That it is a difficult thing to get out of a ſinne into which a man hath often relapſed; a man cannot be healed and recovered without much paine and much adoe the ſecond or third time of the ſame diſeaſe.

2. Poſſible.

Yet I pray you deſpaire not your hearts; ſuppoſe the worſt, that the ſinnes which you have fallen into againe are great, and grievous ſinnes, and that they were not unwilling omiſſions, or ſuddaine paſſions, but had knowledge and premedita-

tion

tion in them; that they were ſinnes once repented of and ſolemnely vowed againſt. 1. All this and much more makes the recovery to be difficult, not deſperate. 2. The ſinnes that *Abraham*, *Lot*, and *Peter* fell into, were great and hainous ſinnes, and yet they recovered againe. 3. There is no diſeaſe beyond Gods cure, or ſinne above his pardon; cannot God pardon ſinne oft? ſurely God that hath once mercifully recovered his, falling backe, will alſo doe it the ſecond and third, and fourth, and every time for his.

Ob. But many fall backe into ſinne and doe never recover themſelves againe, and this may be my caſe?

Sol. True, ſome diſeaſes are dangerous and ſome are deadly, and

and there are relapſes curable and incurable; ſuch who falling back out of malice and obſtinacie, reſting themſelves in a conſtant delight of thoſe ſinnes into which they have relapſed, making their ſinne their gaine, can gaine no aſſurance of healing; but ſuch as fall back through incogitancie and infirmity, being exceeding troubled at heart for their ſinnes and relapſes into their ſinnes, may expect and ſhall finde a cure.

Leave diſputing and uſe theſe meanes following, and by the bleſſing of God you ſhall get out of your diſeaſes of ſinne into which you are relapſed.

Foure meanes to get out of relapſes.

Firſt, worke the relapſes upon your ſoules; repeated ſinnes are as broad and deepe wounds, of which if a man meane to be ſoundly

soundly cured, hee must admit of a sound and thorough search; relapses into sinne are like the returnes of the distemper into the body, of which if a man expect to be rid, he must resolve to fetch up and finde out the distempering cause; untill a man soundly feeleth, and truly knoweth the evillnesse of relapses, hee will not seeke out for any recoverie; by the helpe of judgement, conscience, and the law, we may finde out the full evill of relapses into sin.

Secondly, physick the soule for this sinne, wee are to drink downe the bitter potion of repentance, wee must not thinke to come off of this sin with a few teares and a little sorrow; renewed staines in the soule are not easily gotten off; we

Jer. 3. 25. we must lie down in our shame, and our confusion must cover us; renewed sinnes must have our renewed sorrowes, and renewed hatred, the more a man sinnes, the more reason hath he to hate sinne: and the oftner he sins one sinne, the more reason hath hee to labour the mortifying of that; get above all things a strong and setled hatred and abhomination of all sinnes for time to come, and an unfeigned sorrow for sinnes past.

Thirdly, keepe to the Ordinances, our spirituall recovery is by meanes, who though they can do little of themselves, yet being blessed and assisted they can doe much; these set out relapses to the life; quicken the heart to sorrow; breake open the riches of Gods unspeake-

ſpeakeable mercy and goodneſſe in promiſes of pardon and healing; and doe greatly enable the heart to beleeve all promiſed mercy.

Fourthly, haſt in unto God, ſuing out the promiſes which hee hath made in the Covenant; let no feares or diſtruſts keepe you off; but goe in unto God or elſe you periſh; your diſeaſes are your owne; but all recoveries doe belong to God, who hath undertaken to cure all that returne to him; and therefore come to GOD againe

Hoſ. 13.9. Jer. 3.22.

A threefold way of comming to God for cure.

1. With confeſſion, freely and humbly acknowledging your fault with the Church, *Ier.* 3.13.

2. With petition, intreating his pardon and his peace, ſay, *receive us gratiouſly, Hoſ.* 14.2,4.

3. With

3. With faith, perſwading thy ſoule from the promiſe and performance of God that thou ſhalt be healed.

There are ſeverall promiſes made to anſwer all the poſſible exigencies of Chriſtians; and why doth God make promiſes of healing and forgiving the backſlidings of his people? is it not to encourage the hearts of his children to lay hold on them, and to ſue them out in the needfull time? ſurely if we did more ſpeedily and heartily beſet the Lord, we ſhould finde a great healing of our revoltings and backſlidings.

CASE.

CASE. VIII.

Of ſtrange and terrible thoughts following Chriſtians.

A Chriſtian hath a double converſation, from whence troubles doe ariſe unto him, one is outward, another is inward, that notes the whole carriage of the life, this the courſe of the whole ſoule; a Chriſtian is not a little troubled with himſelfe being wiſe to ſtudy himſelfe and to finde out the frame and temper of his heart, and made tender to feele even the leaſt erroneous flaſhings of the apprehending faculrie, ſuch as his thoughts are, which doe proove unto him great ſoule-

burdens

burdens, as I shall now open unto you in this manner, shewing to you foure things.

Foure things about the thoughts of men. Three sorts of thoughts 1. Natural

1. That thoughts are of three sorts, { 1. Naturall. 2. Spirituall. 3. Sinfull.

Naturall thoughts are those motions, stirrings, and acts which reside or are framed in the sensible, and intellectuall part of man; and they doe comprehend under them those reasonings, consultations, purposes, resolutions, intents, meditations, considerations, conceits and apprehensions, which the understanding by the helpe of fancie frames within it selfe; these following the nature of man in constitution and creation, and immediately resulting from the mind of man, are not unfitly called naturall

naturall thoughts; man is borne and was made a thinking creature, such thoughts will be in us do what we can, it being naturall to the mind to be thinking; and if we take such thoughts in a simple consideration they are no sinnes or faults, the minde of *Adam* in Creation yea and of Christ himselfe (who was in all things like unto us, sinne excepted) were full of such thoughts rightly composed; they had many transactions in their mindes, yea and their mindes held notable discourses with the things that they knew, and touching things to be done; they had their fore-thoughts preparing them to actions, and they had their after-thoughts recollecting things done by them.

Spirituall thoughts are those motions 2. Spiritual

motions and turnings of the minde, flowing from the work of grace in the ſoule, and determining themſelves in ſpirituall and ſupernaturall objects; there are two things which doe conſtitute the ſpirituallneſſe of mans thoughts.

1. The originall cauſe of them; namely their ſpringing from a ſanctified fountaine that is cloſed within the ſoule, the mind muſt be renewed and ſanctified, altered and cleanſed, ere it can and doth yeeld out holy inclinations, and motions, and have within it holy projects, counſells, imaginations and reaſonings.
2. The ſpeciall object of them; the thoughts pitching

pitching themselves in a right way upon things that are divinely good, and making for Gods glory, and mans salvation, are said to be spirituall.

These kinde of thoughts are peculiar unto Gods Saints after regeneration, *for without the Spirit no man is able to thinke one good thought*, 2 Cor. 3. 5. as for wicked men if wee consider their thoughts formally they are starke naught; yea and if wee consider them objectively, they may be naturally and morally, *i.e.* (as they moove in the way of nature, and tend to the good of a civill state and countrey) good; but spiritually good they are not, they no way further their sanctification and obedience, but doe

do occasion much hardnesse and sinfullnesse unto them.

3. Sinfull. Sinnefull thoughts are the motions and stirrings of mans mind unto sinne, when the mind by the object or the subject doth muse on sinne and wickednesse, representing and acting over the same in imagination and speculation, entertaining and harbouring the same in provision; acting and skilling it selfe in the cunnings and methods thereof that it may become wittie in wickednesse; and is continually framing, plotting, and devising wickednesse within it selfe.

Mat. 5. 28
Rom. 13 14.
Pro. 6. 18.
Esa. 32. 7.

Two sorts of evill thoughts. 2. That sinnefull and evill thoughts are of two sorts.

1. Ascending thoughts, which flow from the corrupt heart of man; *Out of the heart proceed*

ceed evill thoughts, saith Christ, *Mat.*15.19. there is not a more entire cause of sinnefull thoughts then sinfull corruption, evill thoughts must have an evill principle; waters doe not more issue out from a full fountaine, then sinfull thoughts do spring from a sinnefull nature.

2. Injected thoughts, whose working is inward, but cause outward, Satan doth venture upon the thoughts, and gets his entrance into the soule by them; one of the Fathers tells us, * that a wicked thought is the divels eldest daughter; this one thing I am sure of, that as naturall corruption

* *Mala cogitatio Diaboli primogenita. Hieron.*

ruption is mother, so Satan is ordinarily father unto vile thoughts in men; Satan put into [b] *David* the thought of numbring his people, and Satan filled the heart of *Ananias that he lied to the Holy Ghost*, *Acts* 5.3.

[b] 1 Chron 21.1.

Happily curiosity may here enquire into the just difference betweene those sinfull thoughts which ascend from mans nature, and such which are injected by Satan?

Certaine it is that there is a reall difference; but for my part I cannot peremptorily conclude it; a Christian may know, that the divell hath beene in his heart and laid his egg there, and shuffled in his motion there; but because there is such a mixture

mixture of seeds in the generation of sinfull thoughts which are monstrous, and that both of them are like *Simeon* and *Levi*, brethren in evill, it is to mee a point of great difficulty to determine their apprehensive difference; yet I reverence those Divines and their opinions who have given out the probable differences betweene Diabolicall and Naturall thoughts, in their unnaturallnesse, unreasonablenesse, suddainesse and unceassantnesse, unto whose reasons I leave my Reader, and doe proceed to teach you.

Diversities of thoughts in men.

3. That sinfull thoughts divide and multiply themselves severally. Sometimes into thoughts of blasphemie against God and Christ, and the Scriptures; men wretchedly imagi-

ning and thinking negatively & unworthily of either, O how meanely conceited are many men of Christ, making him the Carpenters Sonne, a man of sorrowes and no way to be regarded for salvation, and as for the Scriptures, their authority and verity is questioned, and men deeme it to be but the word of man, vaine and fooliſh, and as for God hee is directly or virtually ſhut out in his being and Attributes, men thinke him not to be at all, or not to be ſo juſt, preſent, powerfull, gratious, and mercifull as he hath revealed himſelfe to be; witneſſe theſe Scriptures, *Pſal.* 14. 1. *Iob* 22. 13, 14. *Ephes.* 2. 12. Sometimes into thoughts of infidelity, againſt the power, and promiſe, and providence of God, and theſe ariſe principally in times

Pſal. 94. 19.

Eſa. 53. 3.

2 Pet. 3. 4
1 Cor. 1. 21.

times of mens distresses; now men take thought what they shall eate, and for to morrow how they and theirs shall doe; the Prince thought in himselfe that the present scarcity was such, that should God open windowes in Heaven, it could not cause such a plenty as the Prophet spake of. Sometimes into thoughts of pride, men have selfe-justifying thoughts, and selfe-advancing thoughts, distentorious, and curious thoughts, many times they climbe up unto the exploration of secrets beyond reason to the ruine of their parts and estates. Sometimes into thoughts of folly; mens thoughts are empty and incoherent; they carry the scumme and foaming of the water in them, men many times doe not

Mat. 6. 25, 27, 28 31.

2 King. 7. 2.

Luk. 18. 11.

Luk. 15. 7.

Rom. 12. 3.

know what to make of them, neither are they able to give a good account of them unto God or men; There are also unsetled thoughts which have no steadinesse or fixednesse in them; they come and goe having a fluencie in them, as bubbles rise up and sink againe; so doe the thoughts of many rise and fall; men doe thinke and unthinke againe, even as men by the quick suggestion of their phantasie doe loose one dreame by another, so doe men by the slipperinesse of their thoughts loose one thought in another; nay of such a roaving disposition are our thoughts, that they are much like to the wanton Spaniell, that will run after every bird even to the loosing of his Master; truly there is no staying of thoughts, but

Simile.

they

they will be gone, and many times they take their flight beyond the call and command of Chriſtians themſelves. There are ſtrange & horrible thoughts that many times doe come into mens minds; as for a man to abhorre God, renounce Chriſt, Heaven and all, for a man to murder himſelfe, for a parent to murder his child, &c. There are diſtracting and withdrawing thoughts, ſuch as creepe into us when wee are about the performance of duties, alienating us from the more ſpirituall performance of them; as *Benjamin* found *Ioſephs* cup in his ſack, and hee knew not how it came there, ſo Gods children doe finde ſuch dartings and droppings in of ſtrange thoughts when they are upon duties, that they wonder

whence they ſhould ariſe. Alſo there are unſeaſonable thoughts; thoughts that are good materially may become circumſtantially evill; it is Satans policy to prevent and interrupt a convenient and preſent good, by thruſting in ſome unſeaſonable good, a good that is not well placed and tim'd; for a man to have praying thoughts is good, but when hee ſhould have hearing thoughts to have theſe praying thoughts is unſeaſonable, *&c.* To conclude, there are deſpairing thoughts, men conceiving themſelves to be reprobated and rejected of God, to whom the poſſibility of pardoning mercy and heavenly happineſſe doth no way appertaine; *I ſaid in my haſt I am cut off from before thine eyes*, ſaith *David*;

Pſal. 31. 22.

David; there was his perishing thoughts.

4. That sinnefullnesse of thoughts are a just cause of soule-trouble unto Gods Saints, you shall heare them bitterly "thus complaining, seldome do "thoughts of God or goodnesse "rise up within me, my soule is "so dry and barren, that I sel- "dome think of any good, but "then when I am to do it; yea "and oftentimes when I am do- "ing good I thinke not of it, I "have occasions enough before "me for good thoughts, but my "nature is dull and will not, or "inexpert and cannot make use "of them; and if my thoughts "begin at any time to work up- "on good objects, if I take God, "or Christ, or the Word, or my "sin into my thoughts, I soone "loose the sent, and am farre

Simile.

" from insisting on them; the Bee
" may sometimes light upon a
" good flower, but instantly it
" passeth away and pitcheth it
" selfe upon some filthy weede;
" and I alas, it is long before my
" soule can be brought to pitch
" on a good object; and I find it
" a thing most difficult to make
" my minde to fixe and to keep
" up thoughts of goodnesse in
" me; But as for evill thoughts
" they swarme within my mind
" and settle too fast, you cannot
" name that wicked thought of
" which I am not guilty, my
" thoughts have beene blasphe-
" mous against Christ, and God,
" and the Word of God, my
" thoughts have been doubting
" and distrusting the power,
" goodnesse, and providence of
" God, my thoughts have been
" proud, foolish, and wandring;

" and

"and now I doe deſpaire in my "thoughts of mine eſtate. God "beholds mee in my thoughts, "and it is ſinfull corruption that "ſends up theſe thoughts, and "Satan cannot but enter by "theſe thoughts, and I can doe "nothing as I ſhould do it for "theſe thoughts; my croſſe and "calamity is greatned by theſe "thoughts, alas what will be-"come of mee for theſe my "thoughts?

This is the thing which hath made a deepe wound in the ſpirit; for the curing and comforting whereof, I ſhall lay downe certaine propoſitions and preſcriptions.

Seven ſettlemẽts about thoughts

1. That the deareſt children of God beſides their naturall thoughts, may have many ſinfull and evill thoughts glancing and riſing up within their Iob 1.5

3 Causes of evill thoughts in Gods children.

mindes; yea they may have the same vile thoughts which a very wicked man hath; and wonder not at it; seeing 1. Satan is as watchfull and malicious against them as any other, and hee doth more fiercely assault them then any other, and is more willing to vexe them then any other. 2. Corruption cleaves to the soules of them as well as others, and it workes in them as well as in any other; where the spring of corruption is not wholy dried up, it is and will be more or lesse bubbling out into most vile and noisome thoughts. 3. Infirmity is many times as much in them as it is in others; they are not alwaies so watchful, and feareful as it doth become them; if the windowes stand open no wonder if birds flie into the chamber,

chamber, and if Chriſtians let downe their watch, and care, no wonder that vaine thoughts doe enter, lodging themſelves by armies within them, ſporting themſelves in their mindes, and preſuming to juſtle in with them to the Church, and to the Cloſet, mightily diſtempering and diſtracting them in duty, nay making them to become like other men.

2. That it is a mercy to come unto the ſound acquaintance of the evillneſſe of a mans owne thoughts; Hypocriſie and ſinfull vanity conceive that thoughts are free, and therefore is it feareleſſe and careleſſe about them, making nothing of them; you ſhall hardly perſwade a wicked man to thinke that his thoughts are evill and ought to be bewailed, or amended;

ded; whereas a man that is godly indeed, he is made sensible of the sinnefullnesse of his thoughts by way of feare and trouble, these amaze his minde, afflict his spirit, and doe so greatly burthen him, that he crieth out of them; and by this discovery made unto him, he is set into the way of rising from them, and forsaking of them according to Gods requirement; *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts*; and truth it is, that though the godly doe not finde evill thoughts removed by absolute cessation, so as they shall never stirre more at all; yet they are removed by subjection and manner of operation, although they doe start up, yet the Elect upon the apprehension of their evillnesse, subject

Esa. 55.7.

A twofold removall of evill thoughts, 1 By cessation.

a Subjection.

ſubject not themſelves unto them; they are not ſo effectually active or actuating as formerly, or as they are to wicked men; this is a truth; that evills apprehended are ſooneſt arraigned, condemned, bewailed, prevented, and overcome.

3. That among many ill thoughts lurking and lodging within us, it muſt be our wiſedome to take notice of the good thoughts that are within us alſo; it is moſt true, that Chriſtians are mixt creatures, fleſh and Spirit, nature and grace; and ſo there may be found within them many ſpirituall and excellent thoughts, as well as evill and bad thoughts; I would have men to know

Signes of goodneſſe of thoughts.

1. That every thought of evill is not an evill thought, but the goodneſſe of mans thoughts

ſtand

ſtand in thinking upon the evill and ungodlineſſe of his nature and practiſe, and the diſhonour of God by the ſame unto repentance it ſelfe.

2. That when the heart can lay out for holy duties, and project a courſe of ſanctification, and a way of ſalvation, prudently declining the occaſions ſtirring up to ſinfull thoughts; then there are good thoughts within; all providing thoughts for duty are very good thoughts; the wicked man is thinking how hee may ſhift off all good and doe all evill, and a godly man hath contrary thoughts unto all ſinne, and caring thoughts for all duty.

3. That many times the number of evill thoughts may be more to a Chriſtians ſenſe then the number of his good thoughts;

thoughts; a Chriſtian may ſee and diſcerne in himſelfe a great deale of corruption working againſt a little grace.

4. That one good thought ſpringing up within the ſoule amongſt many bad thoughts, may be a ground of comfort againſt all evill thoughts whatſoever; it being an argument of grace in truth to ſend out good thoughts.

4. That though the ſame evill thoughts may be both in the good and bad, yet it is with a great difference, For

1. It is not all evill thoughts in good men; they have ſome good thoughts in them.

Foure differences betweene the thoughts of good and bad men.

Ob. So have wicked men too?

Sol. Have they good thoughts within them? whence come they? I am

am ſure corrupt nature cannot ſend out one good thought, and unregenerate men are truly empty of ſpirituall thoughts; but make the beſt of them and their thoughts, I am ſure they are in them againſt a temper to evill thoughts, and againſt their will and affections; light is not more diſpleaſing to ſoare eyes, then good thoughts are diſtaſtfull unto wicked men; good thoughts are ſtrangers with them, they goe away as ſoone as they come, all their thoughts of goodnes are tranſient and meerely apprehenſive, no way practicall & permanent,

let

let them be never ſo good materially, they are no way good ſubjectively and circumſtantially.

2. Under all bad thoughts within, a good man is wearie and burdened, and willing of good and better thoughts for them, he cannot fall in with ill thoughts by way of approbation, but in his judgement hee doth condemne the univerſality of evill thoughts, which are thruſt upon his minde unavoidably; wheras wicked men are unwilling of good thoughts, making them their burden, and are hugging of ſinnefull thoughts, making them their delight; affectuous thoughts doe not more belong to the pleaſure of the body, then ſinfull thoughts do to the delight of the wicked.

3. Ill

3. Ill thoughts in the godly are in resistance, as they come not in with welcome, so they stay not there in quiet and entertainement; they doe bewaile them, and pray against them, labouring the remoovall of them by all meanes.

4. Ill thoughts in the godly doe spring from corruption impaired and disabled by the presence and power of sanctifying grace which can hold no peace with corruption; ill thoughts in wicked men doe flow from corruption in strength and unsubdued, and therefore they make no opposition against them any farther then they oppose themselves to themselves, and their owne ends; it is one thing to be troubled with the evill of thoughts, and another thing to be

be troubled with the clogging circumstances of thoughts, an evill man may resist an evill thought, for the declining of some sensible evill, or for the furthering of some other evill, all a wicked mans thoughts doe bowe and bend to sinfull projects, whereas good men under the trouble and vexation of evill thoughts receive much good at the last; God hereby making them more fearefull of sinne, and watchfull over their thoughts.

5. That multitude of rising and injected thoughts not affected, but vexing and perplexing the soule, cannot take away the ground of a Christians comfort and confidence; there is no thought of heart, be it never so vile, but it may be repented of, and divine grace can pardon it; and

Mar. 3. 28. Acts 8. 22.

and they are not of force to alter a mans estate in grace or glory; consider what I say; that if Satan should studie all the arts of hell to coine the most abhominably abhominable thoughts of Atheisme, blasphemy, murder, &c. and afterward dart them with all the violence of hell into the minde of men, (men in the meane time abhorring and rejecting them) they shall proove but mens crosses, they shall not be reputed as their sinnes, and so shall no way impaire their happinesse standing twixt them and Heaven; and as they cannot alter an estate in happinesse, no more can they diminish a condition in holinesse; *Benjamin* was never the more dishoneſt, because *Iosephs* cup was in his sack, or *Ioseph* the more uncleane

Note.

cleane because his mistresse did attempt his chastity, no more do the evill of injected thoughts alter the gratious temper of a Christian; doth the beating of the waves against a rock alter the temper of the rock? no more doth the injecting of evill thoughts by Satan change a Christians holy condition. *Simile.*

6. That where thoughts are sensibly evill and naught, it is more wisedome to seeke their cure and strengthening against them, then to stand too long complaining of them, and of trouble or danger by them; and here know, 1. That it is no easie or ordinary worke to alter, order, and keepe under a mans thoughts, they are very wilde and unruly and wily. 2. That it is not naturall meanes or agents which can cure the

Chri-

Christian of the evillnesse of his thoughts, that which turnes nature must be another thing then nature, all naturall causes worke onely in a naturall way, and to that onely which is naturall, a spirituall agent and a spirituall way is required to

Six helpes against evill thoughts.

free men from ill thoughts; I cannot fall into all particulars, let these that I shall name suffice for the generall.

1. Repent for the whole

Acts 8.22.

evill of your thoughts; let them breake and bleede your soules, and then you are in the way to be delivered from them;

Jer.4.14.

Wash thine heart, O Jerusalem from wickednesse that thou maist be saved, how long shall vaine thoughts lodge within thee? how doe men come to remoove, and dislodge vaine thoughts? it is by repentance for sinne and

un-

ungodlineſſe, this is the forſaking of a mans thoughts ſpoken of by the Prophet *Iſaiah*; *If thou haſt done fooliſhly in lifting up thy ſelfe, or if thou haſt thought evill, lay thine hand upon thy mouth*, ſaith *Salomon*, *Prov.* 30.32. Eſa. 55.7.

2. Give ſcope and rule unto Gods Word which is every way healing and ordering unto the evillneſſe of mens thoughts, the Word is a notable meanes to preſerve, yea and to deliver from evill thoughts; it begets a new ſpring, I meane a new minde, and that will ſend out new and ſuppreſſe the old thoughts; the Word of God is

The uſe of the Word about the thoughts is five-fold

1. A ſearcher and diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of mans heart, it traceth and hunts out the ſecret windings and

min-

mindings of the same, *Heb.* 4. 12.

2. A condemner and reproover of sinfull thoughts; it doth indite all evill thoughts, sharpely checking men for contemplative wickednesse, *Mat.* 5. 28.

3. A remoover of sinnefull thoughts; it frees the soule from evill cogitations, *Psal.* 119. 113. the voice of the Word sounding in the soule unto evill thoughts, is like the wise clamour by which the ravenous birds are scared from their unjust prey.

4. A subduer of evill thoughts; let the Word worke never so powerfully, yet strange thoughts will remaine still in the soule, but the Word is of that force that it casts downe imaginations, and brings into captivity

captivity every thought, 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5.

5. A preſerver againſt evill thoughts; the Word of God can keepe out evill thoughts, and maintaine good thoughts in the minde; it will ſtore and enrich the mind with divine principles and habits; ſo that the minde ſhall not be naked and emptie; but full with the variety of heavenly notions; the Word is full, and the minde ſhall finde heere a promiſe, and there a precept, there a threatning, and heere a reward, &c. the Word is mighty in operation, and it will draw out with ſweeteſt power thoſe heavenly principles, and with them thoſe gratious habits in the minde unto ſome acts and operations; like as the Sun in heate is virtuall to the flowers, ſo is the Word in power to the *Simile.*

ſtirring up of habituall grace and implanted principles, the mind by it is ſet on working and muſing on that which is good. In a word, the Word of God doth preſent the mind with freſh objects of meditation, whereby it mooves the ſoule from one meditation to another, and from one good thought to a better.

3. Wiſely keepe off from all ſuch occaſions and things which might ſtirre up and continue in you evill thoughts; there are many things which will foment matter of evill to the minde, which hath not onely active but receptive diſpoſitions, it doth not onely worke from an inward but an outward cauſe; occaſions have beene very impreſſive upon the minde, we may ſee it in *David* and *Peter*, &c.

There

There are ſeven things (ſtirring up evill thoughts in men) to be taken heed of.

1. The not making conſcience of evill thoughts; it was wont to be ſaid that [a] whatſoever is unlawfull to be done or ſpoken, is as unlawfull to be thought; and I am ſure this is as true, that ſuch as make no conſcience of thoughts, will make no conſcience of what they doe or ſpeake; this fancied liberty of thoughts hath opened the flood-gate and occaſioned the letting in of multitude of vaine thoughts into men.

Seven things to be avoided as continuing ſinfull thoughts in men.

[a] *Quicquid pudet dicere, pudet & cogitare. Hier in Ep. ad Dem.*

2. The ſubjecting of thoughts unto paſſions and affections; thoughts were ordained to moderate and take off paſſions, there being a naturall influence from the thoughts to the affections, but if men give way unto

passionate distempers, these will breed distraction and division of thoughts; if fire be stirred there flie up a multitude of sparkles, and if passions sway, they raise up a variety of disordered thoughts within us, the soule thereby is no sooner delivered of one thought, but it is in labour and paine with another.

3. The neglecting and suppressing of the good motions of the Spirit; the holy Spirit is blowing, and breathing, and filling the heart with good meditations, which must not be quenched if that wee will free our selves from ill thoughts.

1 Thes. 5. 19.

4. Looking on Satans wares; my meaning is, that when Satan shall inject his thoughts into us, wee must not take them up, and gaze upon them, giving them a walking roome within

us;

us; if they stay within us, they will either defile us, or els soone become ours.

5. Evill company, which doth either find us or will make us bad; I say the evill discourses and examples of wicked persons will corrupt good manners and strangely alter the minde both to the evillnesse of thoughts and delights.

6. Idlenesse, this brings forth thoughts of Atheisme, and all kinde of impieties; he who takes off his hand from labour, doth teach his heart to think evill, for the mind will still be working, though the man be idle; 'tis good therefore to be upon the duties of our calling, be made wise by *David*, 2 *Sam.* 11. 1, 2, 3.

7. Worldlinesse; there is a strong efficacie in an earthly treasure, to steale away the soule

both from it ſelfe, and God, the world and gaine begets a world of thoughts in the heads and hearts of men, who are more full of vaine and wandering thoughts in hearing and praying, then ſuch whoſe hearts are ſet upon the riches of this world: thick and foggie ayre doth darken the earth, and worldly engagements do ſtuffe and ſtifle the minde, ſtirring up many plottings and contrivements.

4. Labour for ſtrength of affections unto God; the more we can keepe up ſpirituall affections within us, ſetting them upon God, and duty, and Heaven, the more we ſhall keep out and keepe downe carnall and ſinfull thoughts; it is an excellent thing to fill the head and heart with God, and to be zealouſly

louſly affected in good things; theſe things have a ſtrong power over man, and will make him to be thinking aright; ſee it in *David, O how I love thy Law? it is my meditation all the day, Pſal.* 119.97.

5. Watch and obſerve the heart duly, taking an account of thoughts; let no thoughts come in uneſpied, but keepe watch & ward within the ſoule, and that with much diligence and feare, and learne to examine all your thoughts moſt ſtrictly by the rule; ſay often what and whence are theſe thoughts of mine? can and doe theſe agree with the Word and Law of God? be not too favourable unto them in your ſelves, and you ſhall the better ſuppreſſe them and keepe them out. Pro. 4. 24.

6. Commit your waies unto

God by faith; *Commit thy way*
Pro. 16. 3. *unto the Lord, and thy thoughts*
shall be established, I know no
better way to keep out the con-
fusion and vexation of sinnefull
thoughts, then by setting up
faith in exercise; this is a grace
which will 1. Fence the minde
with divine arguments against
all carnall reasonings and selfe-
resolutions. 2. Answer Satan in
all his reasonings and suggesti-
ons. 3. Raise up the minde to
quite contrary things to those
which Satan puts within us; and
4. When Satan doth urge his
horrible thoughts upon us, it
will make us to flie to God
with our complaints against Sa-
tan, and to spread our condition
before the Lord, saying, Lord
behold mee, and my condition,
I cannot be quiet for Satan, and
mine owne stirring corruptions
they

they are ſtil caſting up evill thoughts within mee contrary to thy Word, thy glory, and my will; Lord leade mee not into theſe temptations, or deliver mee from the evill of theſe thoughts, that they may not prevaile over mee.

Laſtly, know that there may be much comfort to a Chriſtian in doing duty, notwithſtanding he finde many wandring and impertinent thoughts within him in duty, wee may not give over duties publique, and private, becauſe of ſome diſtractions accompanying us, prayer is to be uſed as a meanes to cure our wandrings in prayer; if dirt be caſt into a ſpring, men will not damme it up; and for ſinfull thoughts we are not to caſt off ſpirituall performances; looke upon three things which muſt

Simile.

Three things incouraging to duty under wandring thoughts

ſtay the heart in dutie.

1. Reſolution againſt all ſinfull thoughts in duty, when a Chriſtian doth finde the bent of his heart to be againſt them before he begin the duty, he is to go on in duty.

2. Sincerity and humility in the doing of duties; he that can with a ſincere and humble heart goe thorough duty, may take comfort in performing duty; duties muſt not be judged of by accidentall and involuntary imperfections, but by the temper and diſpoſition of the heart which God looks at.

3. Acceptance of duties in Chriſt, all a Chriſtians duties have their immediate ground of acceptance in Chriſt, and not in the ſtrength and fetledneſſe of mans performance. To conclude all that at this time I meane

meane to ſpeake of in this Argument; know, that Satan in injecting of evill thoughts into the godly, dealeth with them as many wicked men do with the names of Gods children; wee find that the children of others begetting, are many times laid at honeſt mens doores, and unto honeſt mens charge, and who can ſtop the mouth of iniquity? yet in this caſe a cleare conſcience is the ableſt comforter, and confuter; juſt ſo Satan begets and ſtirres up within us evill thoughts; and then hee would father them on us, and trouble us by them; but our pure hearts riſing up againſt them, and bewailing them, makes us cleare of them before God, who is the judge of uprightneſſe and the rewarder of innocencie.

Deo Gloria.

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